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**RESITING GENRE:
A STUDY OF CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN TRAVEL WRITING
IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION.**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to highlight the presence of a large and varied production of contemporary Italian travel writing and to analyse the reasons for its 'invisibility' in the Italian literary system and critical tradition. Through the use of a comparative approach to genre and of current theories developed in the area of Translation Studies, the thesis will outline the different status attributed to travel writing in the Anglo-American and the Italian literary systems. Such a comparative approach allows the study to escape the narrow confines of a perspective based on the idea of national literature and to adopt a wider view, which, in turn, highlights the presence of phenomena otherwise easily overlooked or discarded as insignificant.

The peculiar characteristics of travel writing, a genre mostly based on the representation of the Other for a home audience, are also analysed in order to point out their affinity with translation practices and, ultimately, to underline the 'double translation' implied by translated travel writing.

The case studies which make up the remaining part of the thesis are intended to illustrate different aspects of the genre of travel writing; to provide scope for an analysis of its boundaries and connections with other genres (ranging from ethnography to autobiography, from journalism to fiction, from the essay to the novel); and to illustrate the way in which generic expectations influence both the selection of texts for translation and the strategies adopted when translating and marketing them for a new audience.

The writings of twentieth-century Italian explorers to Tibet, and their translations into English, constitute a significant case of adaptation of foreign texts to the needs and expectations of a British audience (and to the British interests in the geographical area concerned).

The works of Oriana Fallaci and their different reception in Italy with respect to the UK and the USA illustrate the way in which personal biography and generic choices can intersect, determining both the popular image and the critical success of an author and of her work.

Calvino's choice to sublimate the genre of travel writing in the stylized fiction of *Le città invisibili* is treated as an example of the way in which a text which is meant to provide an escape from a low-status genre can become an icon of that same genre once it is translated and read in a different cultural context.

Finally, the case of Claudio Magris's *Danubio* and of its English-language translation provides evidence of the complex network of literary references which marks the reception of a text in different cultures, and of the way in which generic affiliation can both promote the recognition of a 'marginal' text and constrain its more idiosyncratic (and original) characteristics.

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DECLARATION

Selected material included in this thesis has appeared in the following publications:

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L. Polezzi, 'Rewriting Tibet: Italian Travellers in English Translation', *The Translator* (forthcoming).

L. Polezzi, 'Liars and Witnesses', in *Calvino and Narrative*, ed. by Judy Rawson (London: Macmillan, forthcoming).

L. Polezzi, entries on 'Travel Writing' and 'Travellers in Italy', in *The Oxford Companion to Italian Literature*, ed. by Peter Hainsworth and David Robey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

INTRODUCTION

This study takes as its starting point a double absence: the (apparent) lack of Italian travel writing and the (far less debatable) lack of a critical tradition devoted to it. Despite being the object of innumerable travelogues, diaries and guidebooks, Italy does not appear to have produced a significant amount of works in the same genre. Furthermore, in contrast with the constantly increasing number of books, articles and anthologies devoted to foreign travellers to Italy, there is no visible tradition of studies on Italian travel writing by critics and historians of Italian literature. The present study will examine the reasons for this second absence (the lack of critical attention devoted to the genre) while at the same time attempting to show that not only does Italian travel writing exist, but it is a highly creative and vital area of contemporary Italian culture.

The discussion of the Italian *fortuna* of the genre, in Chapter 1, aims to outline the policies of publishing houses as well as the main approaches to travel writing taken by Italian scholars. The critical examination of these trends and their presuppositions leads, in Chapter 2, to a reception-focused approach to genre which is best supported by a comparative methodology based on the stereoscopic and symptomatic reading¹ of Italian texts and their translations into English — a language with a well-established tradition of both primary and secondary literature on travel. The analysis of translations of

¹ The expressions 'stereoscopic reading' and 'symptomatic reading' are taken, respectively, from Marilyn Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism: Translation as Analysis* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), p. 2, p. 54, p. 71, and p. 90; and Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 24-5 and pp. 37-8. See Chapter 2, below, for a detailed discussion of the two concepts and of their relevance for a study of contemporary Italian travel writing.

contemporary Italian texts into English and, where appropriate, of their reception, can be used to escape the narrow perspective offered by the national literature model and to explore the transformations which Italian travel writing undergoes when it is read and appreciated by a different culture and a different literary tradition. Observing what happens when Italian travel writing travels beyond the boundaries of national language, national audiences and national critical enterprises makes it possible to avoid the constraints of the Italian critical tradition and the image it has produced (or failed to produce) of Italian travel writing. Translation as a material condition of this form of travelling (or transfer) from one culture to another, as well as Translation Studies as a methodological and analytical framework, can highlight constraints and characteristics of the texts under examination (both originals and translated versions) as well as those of the audiences they address and the literary and critical traditions they enter. The fact that English literature has a much more established tradition of both travel writing and related criticism than its Italian counterpart, also allows for the observation of the way in which translation operates between unequal literary systems: questions of genre definition and system dynamics need to be addressed in order to explain the selection of a given text for translation as well as the strategies adopted by translator, editor and publisher, or the reactions of reviewers.

On the other hand, the choice of concentrating on texts dealing with places and people other than those the original and the translation belong to, stresses the double, or second level nature of travel writing translation, and of its complex representation of reality. Some texts, in fact, have been intentionally excluded from the study: these are the works devoted by Italian writers to the representation of their own country, or to territories of Italian colonial occupation and mass-migration. Here the issues of representation and their

relationship with the choice of strategies in the English-language translations become peculiarly intricate. These specific cases deserve separate attention and a distinct line of analysis, which cannot be included in the limited space of the present study. As a result, the scope of this study will be confined to the works of Italian travellers to foreign lands, to their accounts of 'elsewhere' — and to the way their efforts travelled in translation. Chapter 3 deals with theoretical questions concerning the relationship between the nature of this kind of foreign travel writing — its necessarily fictional, opaque, rather than realistic nature, and its role in the construction of images of Self and Other — and that of translation — the way in which it too participates in the construction of identity and difference, and the intricate crossings through which it relates one culture to another, but also feeds back to shape the original text and culture, or moves on to appropriate images of yet other realities, whose voice may well not be heard at all if not through this multi-layered translation.

The chronological limits of the case studies which occupy the remaining four chapters comprise the period between the end of the Second World War and the end of the 1980s. While this remains in part an arbitrary choice, it can be argued that it is justified by the occurrence of significant historical and cultural shifts at both ends of the period selected. In Italy, the Second World War marks the end of the Fascist era and of its attempts to police the frontiers of Italian culture (including travel and translation), while in Britain it signals the end of the imperial age and the advent of the consumerist society with its mass phenomena (including mass-tourism, which significantly altered the modalities of travel and travel writing). At the other extreme of the period under examination, the fall of the Berlin wall marks a substantial re-drawing of the (real and imaginary) boundaries of the Western world and of its relationship with its Others. Yet, like all boundaries, even these

basic chronological limitations remain fluid and immediately require transgression: the first case study, for instance, though taking its move from a book written and translated in the 1950s, causes a loop which brings the analysis back to the 1930s, the 1920s and even the first decade of the century, to the ghosts of fascism, nationalism and empire.

If the chronological boundaries of the study are necessarily fluid and to an extent arbitrary, those of its content are even more so. To date, there is no complete survey of translations from Italian into English, and what material does exist does not include 'travel writing' as a category.² Even the most extensive survey of contemporary travel writing in English, Michael Kowalewski's 'Travel Writing Since 1900: A Selective Chronology', which attempts to include all relevant texts translated into English, only manages to list four Italian books.³ Yet the present work intends to be a study, not a history of contemporary Italian travel writing in English translation.⁴ As a consequence no attempt will be made to

² The recent *Babel Guide to Italian Fiction (in English Translation)*, ed. by Ray Keenoy and Fiorenza Conte (London: Boulevard Books, 1995), for instance, systematically excludes all non-fiction writing, although it does include works such as Pavese's diary *Il mestiere di vivere: Diario 1935-1950* (Turin: Einaudi, 1952; English edn *This Business of Living: Diaries 1935-1950*, trans. by A. E. Murch with Jeanne Molli (London: P. Owen, 1961)), or Claudio Magris's *Danubio* (Milan: Garzanti, 1986; English edn *Danube*, trans. by Patrick Creagh (London: Collins Harvill, 1989)), whose review starts with clarifications on how this 'is not exactly a work of fiction' (p. 78). For information on contemporary trends in Italian-English translation see also Zygmunt G. Baranski, 'La diffusione della letteratura italiana contemporanea italiana in Gran Bretagna', *The Italianist*, 13 (1993), 255-65.

³ The survey is included in *Temperamental Journeys: Essays on the Modern Literature of Travel*, ed. by M. Kowalewski (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1992), pp. 287-356 (pp. 350-51 for the Italian texts). Kowalewski's selection criteria exclude 'any fiction', as well as 'autobiographies, memoirs, or collections of personal essays, unless they include a significant number of travel essays' (p. 287); this possibly leads to exclusions in the case of Italian works, whose generic labelling, as we shall see, may well be ambiguous. Occasional references to translated Italian texts can also be found in Anglo-American travel writing criticism, as in the case of Mary Louise Pratt's analysis of Moravia's images of Africa in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 216-21; or Dennis Porter's references to Pasolini's impressions of India in *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 297.

⁴ 'Study' and 'history' denote two distinct approaches to a subject, as pointed out by Dennis Porter in introducing his *Haunted Journeys* (p. 16): 'The present work is organized as a "study" and not as a history. It in no sense claims to be a comprehensive history of European travel writing over the past two and a half centuries, but focuses deliberately on a limited number of specific works. [...] If I speak of "a study" rather than "studies", that is because although the different chapters are by and large independent and could be read separately, there are certain overarching concerns and questions that are illuminated through the comparison and contrast of works written at different historical moments.'

produce an exhaustive survey of the field, and each sample case study will be justified in terms of its specific historical and cultural significance, rather than its coverage. In fact, the selection of specific texts for in-depth analysis is dictated by the choice to work on the margins of this heterogeneous and marginal genre, since it is on its borders, where it most clearly overlaps with other text-types and traditions, where it gets 'distressed' and hybridized, that one can ask more probing questions and observe telling developments and paradoxes.⁵ Chapter 4 looks at the borders between exploration, ethnography and literature in the works of twentieth-century Italian travellers to Tibet and analyses the metamorphoses of their narratorial voices as well as the reappraisal of the functions of their texts once these were translated into English. Chapter 5 discusses in detail the relationship between travel writing, autobiography, and journalism in the works of Oriana Fallaci, one of the few contemporary Italian women writers to have achieved vast international success (and notoriety). By contrast Chapter 6 traces the hidden relationship between reportage and literature in the writings of Italo Calvino, focusing on his *Le città invisibili*, a book which is both the sign of Calvino's refusal to surrender to the temptations of the travelogue and arguably the most successful contemporary international icon of the genre. Finally, Chapter 7 follows the fortune of Claudio Magris's *Danubio* through its Italian and English reception, contrasting the genre affiliation of this complex book in two different cultural and literary contexts, and analysing the relationship between genre shifts on the macrotextual level and translation strategies operating at the microtextual level.

⁵ Susan Stewart discusses the phenomenon of 'distressed genres' and their role in the historical evolution of literary canons in *Crimes of Writing: Problems in the Containment of Representation* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 66-101 (see note 17 to Chapter 2 below); while J. B. Harley has underlined the importance of the margins (geographical, textual, or other) of 'the contemporary map' for any interpretative strategy aimed at deconstructing established norms ('Deconstructing the Map', in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, ed. by Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 231-47 (pp. 238-40)).

This map of the study could be supplemented, redrawn, displaced by alternative or complementary selections, which would lead to different associations, different locations and ultimately different routes. If the metaphor of travel and its multiple itineraries seems inevitable in representing the structure of such a study, its impervious pervasiveness in images of writing and of criticism (as well as contemporary life) may perhaps contribute to justify the arbitrariness of the choices made at each cross-roads and the meandering of the analysis across such a varied landscape.

1. THE CASE FOR ITALIAN TRAVEL WRITING

(i) Anatomy of an Absence

Contemporary Italy both welcomes and produces increasing masses of tourists, it is both the point of departure and the goal of innumerable journeys, the object of centuries of *Wanderlust* and the homeland of an increasingly mobile affluent population.¹ Yet this double-edged relationship with travel seems to be unequally reflected in the country's production and consumption of travel writing. In the Anglo-Saxon world travel books are generally acknowledged to have grown dramatically in number and popularity over the last three decades.² A strong interest for this kind of writing is also spreading among the contemporary, well travelled, Italian public, and the growing appeal of the genre³ is confirmed by the fact that over the last few years major Italian publishing houses have launched travel writing series and small publishers have also ventured into the field. Yet most of the material published in Italy as travel writing is translated from other languages (with a predominance of English, followed by French, Spanish and Portuguese), and very few Italian works are promoted as travel books in the catalogues and advertising campaigns

¹ At the end of the 1980s Italy was fifth in the classification of tourist demand by country of origin, with a 5 percent share of the world market, and eighth, with a 4 percent quota, among tourist destinations. For a detailed analysis of recent trends in the Italian tourist industry see Giuliano Bianchi, 'L'Italia nella specializzazione turistica internazionale', and Paolo Baglioni, 'Flussi turistici in Italia e in Toscana', both in *Opportunità e tendenze del turismo comunitario*, ed. by Lucio Scognamiglio (Milan: Francoangeli, 1992), pp. 33-65 and pp. 67-100 respectively.

² See for instance Colin Thubron, 'Travel Writing Today: Its Rise and Its Dilemma', in *Essays by Divers Hands*, ed. by A. N. Wilson, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, n.s. 44 (1986), 167-81 (p. 168); and M. Kowalewski, 'Introduction: The Modern Literature of Travel', in *Temperamental Journeys*, pp. 1-16 (p. 1 and pp. 6-7).

³ The term is used here in its most general and intuitive form. Chapter 2 will examine definitions of genre and their applicability to the case of Italian travel writing.

of small as well as large publishers. At first glance, then, modern and contemporary Italian travel writing is either an absent or an invisible genre.

The analysis that follows seeks to establish the relative position of contemporary Italian travel writing with respect to neighbouring genres. Foreign travel writing published in Italy in translation, Italian journalism and the novel, as well as Italian travel writing dating from previous centuries will be examined from the perspective of their current position in the Italian book market, in an attempt to highlight the causes of the paradoxical unbalance between the popularity of Italian and foreign travel writing in contemporary Italy. The analysis of editorial policies is informed by current cultural theory and by the role it assigns to the cultural industry in the mechanisms of cultural production.⁴ The publishing industry is part of that complex network of power regulating the contemporary literary system which André Lefevere studied under the label of 'patronage'. Lefevere defined patronage as 'something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature', including publishers and the media.⁵

⁴ On cultural production and consumption see in particular Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), pp. 219-53; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice (London: Routledge, 1986), especially pp. 230-34. On the systemic nature of culture see for instance Jurij M. Lotman and Boris A. Uspenskij, *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*, ed. by Ann Shukman (Ann Arbor: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Michigan, 1984), and, for a sociological perspective, Niklas Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society*, trans. Stephen Holmes and Charles Larmore (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). On the development of the Italian cultural industry in the twentieth century see David Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era. 1880-1980: Cultural Industries, Politics and the Public* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990); useful contributions on the subject can also be found in *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy: Essays on Mass and Popular Culture*, ed. by Zygmunt G. Baranski and Robert Lumley (London: Macmillan, 1990) and *Italian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, ed. by David Forgacs and Robert Lumley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). On the specific role of the Italian publishing industry see Gian Carlo Ferretti, *Il best seller all'italiana: Fortune e formule del romanzo "di qualità"* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1983); Vittorio Spinazzola, *L'offerta letteraria: Narratori italiani del secondo Novecento* (Naples: Morano, 1990); and Stefano Tani, *Il romanzo di ritorno* (Milan: Mursia, 1990).

⁵ André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 15; on the same page, Lefevere adds: 'Patronage can be exerted by persons, such as the Medici, Maecenas, or Louis XIV, and also by groups of persons, a religious body, a political party, a social class, a royal court, publishers, and, last but not least, the media, both newspapers and magazines and larger television corporations. Patrons try to regulate the relationship between the literary system and the other

According to Lefevere, the main routes through which patronage operates are an 'ideological component, which acts as constraint on the choice and development of both form and subject matter', an 'economic component' which ensures the ability of the writer to make a living, and 'an element of status' bestowed upon those who accept patronage (p. 16). All of these elements (the status of the individual writer, the economic circumstances of literary production, and the strategic choices operated both by writers and publishers in relation to form and content) play a role in the recent history of Italian travel writing.

Lefevere also pointed out that patrons work in close partnership with another regulating element of the literary system: its professionals, 'the critics, reviewers, teachers, translators' (p. 14).⁶ Patronage, in fact, 'is usually more interested in the ideology of literature than it is in poetics, and it could be said that the patron "delegates authority" to the professional when poetics is concerned' (p. 15). An analysis of publishing strategies would thus be incomplete without reference to the critical positions which emerge from them and which inform, at a given time, the dominant poetics of a particular literary system with regard to a specific type of production. In the following pages, then, professionals and patronage, poetics and ideology, production and reception will repeatedly be shown to interconnect in the area occupied by a marginal genre such as travel writing.

systems, which, together, make up a society, a culture. As a rule they operate by means of institutions set up to regulate, if not the writing of literature, at least its distribution.'

⁶ Similar views are expressed by Bourdieu in *Distinction* (p. 231): 'In the case of the production of cultural goods at least, the relation between supply and demand takes a particular form: the supply always exerts an effect of symbolic imposition. A cultural product — an avant-garde picture, a political manifesto, a newspaper — is a constituted taste, a taste which has been raised from the vague semi-existence of half-formulated or unformulated experience, implicit or even unconscious desire, to the full reality of the finished product, by a process of objectification which, in present circumstances, is almost always the work of professionals.' On the relationship between the Italian cultural industry and Italian literary criticism see for instance *Critica sotto inchiesta: Le nuove correnti metodologiche e la critica militante*, ed. by Mario Miccichesì (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1976).

(i.i) Large Publishing Houses and Travel Writing: The Case of Feltrinelli⁷

The most successful among the travel writing collections launched by well established Italian publishers is, to date, the series Feltrinelli/Traveller.⁸ Created in the first half of the 1990s by one of the most innovative among large Italian publishers, Feltrinelli/Traveller is however mostly devoted to contemporary travel books translated from English. Volumes included in the series range from Bill Bryson's portrait of the USA in *The Lost Continent* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989) to Redmond O'Hanlon's account of exotic adventures in *Into the Heart of Borneo* (Edinburgh: Salamander Press, 1984). Robin Davidson, Doris Lessing, Pico Iyer and Colin Thubron are among the many other English language authors translated for Feltrinelli. On the other hand, the number of Italian volumes included in the series is limited and the line-up of authors is relatively unimpressive. By 1995 out of twenty volumes published only two were by Italian authors: Chiara Ruffinengo's *Altrove: Lettere di una donna dal mondo* and Corrado Ruggeri's *Farfalle sul Mekong: Tra Thailandia e Vietnam*.⁹ In particular, all the Italian authors share a journalistic background and an almost total lack of previous experience in writing full-length works.¹⁰

⁷ In this and the following sections full bibliographical details of titles mentioned are given only when directly relevant to the present study.

⁸ An antecedent of Feltrinelli's initiative can be found in Longanesi's series *I cento viaggi*, edited by Franco Marengo (a scholar of English literature) in the 1960s and 70s. This series, however, had a much more canonic approach to the genre, and included translations of classics such as *Coryat's Crudities* (first published in London in 1611); see Thomas Coryat, *Crudezze: Viaggio in Francia e in Italia*, ed. by Franco Marengo and Antonio Meo, *I cento viaggi*, 19 (Milan: Longanesi, 1975).

⁹ Both Milan: Feltrinelli, 1994. The percentage increased slightly over the next two years, and in 1997 the number of Italian texts had grown to six (for a total of five writers) out of thirty-six. The percentages for Italian volumes (10 and 16.6 percent, respectively) are very low even when compared with the generally high number of translated books in the Italian publishing market. According to data published in Lawrence Venuti, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Translation: Discourse, Subjectivity, Ideology*, ed. by L. Venuti (London and New York: 1992), pp. 1-17 (pp. 5-6 and p. 15), at the beginning of the 1990s, translations amounted to 26 percent of all volumes printed in Italy (as compared to 2.5 percent in the UK). The ratio of translated books becomes much higher in the literary field, reaching occasional peaks of 70 or even 90 percent. This suggests that travel writing might be one of the areas of highest concentration of imports. See also L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 11-17. According to data included in Laura Lilli, 'Come la Coca Cola beviamo i

Feltrinelli's catalogue, however, also includes a variety of volumes which could easily be described as travel writing yet have been excluded from the Traveller series. Their inclusion in different collections points to alternative associations and genre taxonomies, which are significant for an analysis of the reception of travel writing in Italy. The work of Pino Cacucci, whose *Puerto Escondido* was filmed by Gabriele Salvatores and became one of the most successful travel-movies in the history of Italian cinema, is a case in point.¹¹ Cacucci's *Camminando: Incontri di un viandante* (1996) was published in Feltrinelli's Serie Bianca, which includes monographs on topical issues such as the growth of the Russian mafia, a selection of diaries and autobiographies, and a number of volumes whose titles qualify them as reportages.¹² In his brief introduction the author describes *Camminando* as a series of encounters all arising from travel, repeatedly pointing out the essential link between his travel experiences and his memory of places and people: 'Da ogni viaggio sono tornato con il ricordo di qualcuno più che di qualcosa. Ho una conoscenza dei luoghi attraverso i racconti di uomini e donne incontrati lungo il cammino, e con gli occhi della memoria rivedo più facilmente le espressioni dei loro volti anziché le

loro libri', *La Repubblica*, 10 August 1998, p. 25, percentages remained more or less unchanged in 1996. On the origins and development of these trends see also Franco Moretti, *Atlante del romanzo europeo. 1800-1900* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997) and Lino Pertile, 'The Italian Novel Today: Politics, Language, Literature', in *The New Italian Novel*, ed. by Z. G. Baranski and L. Pertile (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp. 1-19.

¹⁰ Ruggeri, the only Italian so far to have had two volumes published in the series, is profiled as follows in his second Feltrinelli/Traveller book, *Il canto delle lucciole: Viaggio in Nuova Guinea tra cannibali e adoratori di spiriti* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1995), p. 2: 'Corrado Ruggeri vive e lavora a Roma dove è nato nel 1957. Giornalista del "Corriere della Sera" [sic], viaggiatore per lavoro e passione, ha scritto reportage da tutto il mondo. Con Feltrinelli/Traveller ha pubblicato *Farfalle sul Mekong: Tra Thailandia e Vietnam* (1994, due edizioni in due mesi).' Similar profiles introduce Ruffinengo, Del Sette, Dini Righetti and Ramazzotti, the other four Italian authors published in the series, none of whom is a well known name in the panorama of contemporary Italian literature.

¹¹ P. Cacucci, *Puerto Escondido* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990); *Puerto Escondido*, dir. by G. Salvatores, Penta Film, 1993.

¹² For instance, the Italian translation of Nelson Mandela's *Long Road to Freedom* (London: Little and Brown, 1994) appeared in this series, while an obvious example of journalistic affiliation made explicit by the title is Fergal Keane's *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey* (London: Viking, 1995) which was published in the Serie Bianca as *Stagione di sangue: Un reportage dal Ruanda* (1997).

bellezze di tanti paesaggi.’¹³ Cacucci also warns the reader of the episodic structure of *Camminando* and of its refusal to abide by easy distinctions between home and abroad:

Non c'è ordine “geografico”, o cronologico, in questi capitoli. L'America Latina è così presente perché è là che ho stretto molti legami di amicizia, e il Messico ricorre più spesso di ogni altro paese. Ma anche per le strade della Germania o della Spagna ho conosciuto qualcuno che valesse la pena fermarsi ad ascoltare (sempre ne vale la pena, credo) e nelle ultime pagine, l'incontro narrato è avvenuto dietro l'angolo di casa: non c'è sempre bisogno di varcare gli oceani per conoscere una storia da non dimenticare. (p. 5)

The connection with journalistic reportage could have sustained the affiliation of Cacucci's book to either the essay or the travel genre, as demonstrated by the stress put on the journalistic credentials of the Italian authors in the biographical profiles of the Feltrinelli/Traveller series. It was possibly the fragmented, non-linear quality of Cacucci's work which, combined with the topical flavour of some of the people and places mentioned in the volume, determined its allocation to the Serie Bianca.

Exclusion from one series is not, however, the obvious result of inclusion in the other, since Bill Bryson's *America perduta: In viaggio attraverso gli U.S.A.* and Cees Nooteboom's *Verso Santiago: Itinerari spagnoli* have appeared both in Feltrinelli/Traveller and in the cheaper Universale Economica Feltrinelli, thus establishing a precedent for the multiple publication of volumes whose generic affiliations (and perceived selling potential) may invite extra exposure. It is interesting to note, though, that multiple publication in both this and another series has not so far applied to any volumes by Italian authors: successful books such as Ruggeri's *Farfalle sul Mekong* have not been reprinted in more economic

¹³ *Camminando*, p. 5. The link with travel is confirmed by comments on the back cover, where Cacucci's book is presented as 'racconti di vicende esaltanti, drammatiche, tragicomiche o assurde: ogni capitolo è un viaggio in compagnia di chi narra'.

format, nor has any established Italian author been included in the travel writing catalogue. Gianni Celati's recent *Avventure in Africa*, for instance, has been published by Feltrinelli in their series I Narratori, despite being described by the author as the faithful diary of a trip through Mali, Senegal and Mauritania, and being introduced by the American italianist Rebecca West as a cinematic travel account, remindful of Nanni Moretti's travels on a Vespa in the movie *Caro Diario*.¹⁴

(i.ii) Two Small Publishers: Biblioteca del Vascello and E.D.T.

Smaller publishers which have devoted considerable space to travel writing include the Rome-based Biblioteca del Vascello and E.D.T. (Edizioni di Torino).¹⁵ The editorial policy of these two houses is remarkably similar, and differs substantially from the one adopted by Feltrinelli: E.D.T. and Biblioteca del Vascello mostly publish new editions of volumes already available in Italian (though often out of print) with the addition of the occasional novelty; and both catalogues combine well known (mostly foreign) names with a few

¹⁴ G. Celati, *Avventure in Africa* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1998), p. 5. Rebecca West's comments are on the back cover of Celati's book; *Caro Diario* (Sacher Film, Banfilm, Sept Cinéma, Canal Plus, 1994) won international acclaim when Nanni Moretti was awarded the Best Direction prize at the 1994 Cannes Film Festival.

¹⁵ Other examples are Rubbettino Editore with the series Il Viaggio: Esperienza, racconto, utopia, which includes travel writing by Engels and Benjamin as well as lesser known Italian authors; Alfredo Guida, whose series Ritratti di città is mostly devoted to foreign writers but also includes Giuseppe Ungaretti's *Viaggio nel Mezzogiorno* (Naples: 1995); ECIG, which has published Giacomo Bove's *Viaggio alla Terra del Fuoco* (Genoa: 1992) and other texts by Italian travellers and explorers in its miscellaneous series Piccoli ritorni; the Touring Club Italiano, which publishes a series called Miraggi whose titles include works by Alexandre Dumas and Henry M. Stanley as well as Edmondo De Amicis; Franco Muzzio's collection Aritroso, featuring books by Cecchi, De Amicis and Barzini as well as Stevenson, Loti, Gorkij and Huxley; CIERRE Edizioni, with the series Lontananze which includes the translation of Robert Byron's *The Road to Oxiana* (London: Macmillan, 1937; Italian edn. *La strada per Oxiana*, trans. by Francesco Brunelli (Verona: 1993)), and is generally devoted to 'I viaggi, i distacchi, gli spaesamenti, le passioni geografiche, le rivisitazioni e gli aggiornamenti storici. Contro gli squallori dell'atopia, di un mondo senza luoghi e senza storie' (the quotation is from the back cover of Byron's book).

(mostly Italian) less immediately recognizable authors. The focus of both publishers is on the twentieth century, with occasional forays into the nineteenth.

Biblioteca del Vascello (active in the first half of the 1990s) published a number of collections, many of which had a strong element of travel writing, though no attempt was made to limit the selection on the basis of strict generic distinctions. The eclectic philosophy of the publisher is best summed up in the description of the collection I Vascelli: 'veri libri di piccolo formato e di basso costo che contengono nelle loro varie sezioni autori italiani e stranieri, generi letterari diversi, classici e novità, con introduzione, note e apparato critico'.¹⁶ The collection, whose diminutive format is remindful of traditional travel editions, is colour coded according to topic, nation of origin, or period. Travel books are to be found in more than one sub-group: the Serie sabbia, devoted to 'Gente e paesi', includes Giovanni Comisso's *Approdo in Grecia* (1995),¹⁷ while the travel notes of Enrico Emanuelli, a journalist and travel correspondent who died in 1967, have been published posthumously, under the title *Una lettera dal deserto* (1995), in the Serie azzurra, which is reserved to 'Italiani del '900'. An eclectic selection of authors and titles, mixing travel books with fiction and other genres, is also the hallmark of the Serendipity series which offers Michail Bulgakov's *Mosca: la città del Maestro. Diari inediti*, or Valery Larbaud's *Color di Roma*, side by side with Jean Cocteau's *Ritratti ricordo*, Karel Capek's *Dášenska: Storia di un cucciolo*, and Ennio Flaiano's *Il cavastivale* — this last introduced as 'il diario satirico di un viaggio non del tutto improbabile in una terra fantastica dai tratti speculari a quelli della realtà. Il narratore, emulo di Gulliver, ripercorre le strade di un'Italia

¹⁶ The quotation is taken from the 1994 catalogue of Biblioteca del Vascello, which is also the source of information concerning titles included in the series Serendipity and I Viaggi.

¹⁷ Comisso's book was first published in 1954 (Bari: Leonardo Da Vinci).

camuffata in scenari fantastici ma drammaticamente reali'.¹⁸ A similar variety of authors, topics and genres also characterizes the Frammenti series, which includes Oscar Wilde's *La decadenza della menzogna* next to Heinrich Heine's *Le notti fiorentine* and Aldo Palazzeschi's *Nell'aria di Parigi*.¹⁹ Biblioteca del Vascello also published a specialist travel collection, *I Viaggi*. Authors who appeared in this series range from Stendhal to Julien Green, from Mark Twain to Franz Kafka, Pierre Loti, Fernando Pessoa, Albert Camus and Robert Byron. Significantly, the Italians included in this collection are very few (three volumes out of twenty-five by 1994), and none enjoys a degree of fame comparable to that of the foreign writers published in the series.²⁰ What this examination of the catalogue of Biblioteca del Vascello indicates is, on the one hand, a very fluid definition of travel writing and of its perceived margins and, on the other, the impression that no Italian writer of literary stature has produced travel books comparable to those which constitute the international core of the genre.

Further evidence of these trends can be found in the *Viaggi e Avventura* collection published by E.D.T.. The series, which in 1997 included twenty-two titles, consists mostly of translations of works by writers such as Victor Hugo, Henry James, Pierre Loti, or Rebecca West. Recent best-selling authors such as Peter Mayle and Vikram Seth also make an appearance. The percentage of Italians is higher than usual (six out of twenty-two), yet the choice of texts is marked by a conscious effort to resurrect forgotten minor works by just as minor (though not always forgotten) authors — an operation which could be

¹⁸ E. Flaiano, *Il cavastivale*, ed. by Anna Longoni (Rome 1993; 1st edn Milan: Bompiani, 1988); the quotation is from the back cover.

¹⁹ Palazzeschi's volume was first published in Rome by Editrice Cultura Moderna in 1945; the Biblioteca del Vascello edition appeared in 1991.

²⁰ The most immediately recognizable among the Italian volumes included in this series is Giuseppe Baretti's *Narrazione incompiuta di un viaggio in Inghilterra, Portogallo e Spagna*, which first appeared in 1762 as *Lettere familiari a' suoi tre fratelli*.

qualified as a piece of antiquarian conservation work. The intentional nature of this editorial strategy is confirmed by the inclusion in most volumes of prefaces written by well known personalities of contemporary Italian culture. So the writer Francesca Sanvitale traces the biographical profile of the geographer and ethnographer Renzo Manzoni (Alessandro Manzoni's grandson), placing him and his *El Yèmen: Un viaggio a Sana'a, 1877-78* in the context of the international web of travel, exploration and writing which characterized the second half of the nineteenth century, while also praising the accuracy of Manzoni's observations and the quality of his descriptions.²¹ The critic Goffredo Fofi remembers his colleague Mario Praz, traces parallels and divergences between Praz's production as a scholar of literature and his travel writing, and even ventures to draw connections between Praz, Greene and Chatwin.²² And opening yet another volume, the journalist and cultural commentator Bruno Gambarotta (who is also the curator of the series) praises the idiosyncratic personality of Luciano Bianciardi, author of *Viaggio in Barberia*, enlarging on the importance of the rediscovery of this contemporary journalist, writer and translator, as well as the respective merits of the people who made it possible (including Oreste del Buono and, by implication, Gambarotta himself).²³

E.D.T. (like Feltrinelli) concentrates on the work of Italian authors whose professional description is not primarily that of 'scrittore': journalist, critic, or ethnographer are labels much more frequently attached to the names of Bianciardi, Praz and Manzoni than the accolade of 'writer', and the same is true of other Italians in the series, like Elio

²¹ F. Sanvitale, 'Introduzione', in R. Manzoni, *El Yèmen: Un viaggio a Sana'a, 1877-78* (Turin: E.D.T., 1991), pp. ix-xxi; the book reproduces the first part of Manzoni's *El Yèmen: Tre anni nell'Arabia felice* (Rome: Tipografia Eredi Botta, 1884).

²² G. Fofi, 'Prefazione', in M. Praz, *Penisola pentagonale* (Turin: E.D.T., 1992; 1st edn Milan: Alpes, 1928), pp. vii-xii.

²³ B. Gambarotta, 'Prefazione', in L. Bianciardi, *Viaggio in Barberia* (Turin: E.D.T., 1997; 1st edn Milan: L'Editrice dell'Automobile, 1969), pp. vii-ix.

Modigliani and Luigi Barzini jr. As a consequence, introductions often make a conscious effort to find excuses for the ‘unwriterly’ quality of some of the passages the reader will encounter, or draw attention to stylistic achievements in a tone which manages to sound at once pleasantly surprised and utterly patronising. Francesca Sanvitale’s assessment of Renzo Manzoni’s prose is a case in point:

La sua scrittura è nitida, precisa e vivace in certi punti. In altri egli diventa un poco pedante, come si conviene a un osservatore ottocentesco chiamato a “dare relazione” di “tutto” poiché tutto è sconosciuto. In altri ancora è velata dall’entusiasmo e i particolari allora si fanno più evidenti, il quadro senza essere pittoresco si fa più efficace, emozionante.

In ogni parte delle “escursioni”, come egli le chiamò, avvertiamo la presenza di conoscenze molteplici e funzionali, qualche volta ingenuamente didattiche, alla maniera che destava le ironie di Flaubert. Una sensazione appena, poiché prevale l’uso diretto e necessario di questo nozionismo, come oggi si chiamerebbe, e di una informazione vasta e utile.²⁴

This search for the forgotten travel piece by a minor (and ‘unwriterly’) author is symptomatic of the predominant attitude towards Italian travel writing: the absence of a stable genre and an established canonic tradition favours the perception of a lack of major texts and, by implication, suggests the need for an archaeological campaign which might eventually unearth forgotten traces of the genre (though, given its premises, such an operation is unlikely to ‘discover’ great masterpieces or to modify substantially the overall perception of the genre).

²⁴ F. Sanvitale, ‘Introduzione’, p. x.

(i.iii) Bookshops and the 'Travel' Section

Similar conclusions can be drawn if one walks into a large Italian bookshop and carries out an examination of its travel writing section.²⁵ The ratio and relative visibility of Italian and foreign texts remains more or less the same as in the specialist and semi-specialist series described so far. The classics of modern European travel writing, from Goethe's *Italianische Reise* to Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, are all available in Italian translation, and so are minor contemporary masterpieces such as José Saramago's *A bagagem do viajante*, Fernando Pessoa's *Lisbon: What the Tourist Should See*, Jean-Paul Sartre's *La Reine Albemarle ou le dernier touriste*, or Edgar Morin's *Journal de Californie*. While these and similar books can be found on the shelves marked 'Viaggi', only a few titles represent the Italian contribution to the genre (and, as one might expect, there is no trace of a separate shelf devoted to Italian travel writing). In addition to the ones already mentioned, a few more volumes by Italian authors make their way into the travel section. Often the connection seems to have been made simply through an 'obvious' title, as in the case of works as different as Domenico Rea's *Viaggiare stanca* (the collected correspondences of the contemporary Neapolitan writer, 'forced' to become an unwilling and unsuccessful traveller by his duties as a journalist of *Il Mattino*)²⁶ and Lazzaro Spallanzani's *Un viaggio all'Etna* (an extract from his six-volume account of scientific voyages in various parts of Italy, *Viaggio nelle due Sicilie e in alcune parti dell'Appennino*,

²⁵ The following comments are based on the examination of the 'Travel' sections of large bookshops in Florence and Rome over the years 1994-97. This kind of analysis cannot be completely systematic, given the nature of the evidence. Yet the relevance of the search is confirmed precisely by the convergence between the trends noticed among publishers and those evidenced by shelving criteria in bookshops. It should also be noted that none of the airport bookshops checked appeared to have a separate travel section.

²⁶ The volume was published in 1997 by the Rome-based RTM.

which first appeared in 1792).²⁷ The same logic possibly explains the rare inclusion, in the travel section, of some very well known contemporary names, such as Luigi Malerba, with *Il viaggiatore sedentario* (Milan: Rizzoli 1993), or Carlo Levi and his *Il futuro ha un cuore antico: Viaggio nell'Unione Sovietica* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982; 1st edn 1956). Few volumes by major Italian writers, however, are to be found regularly among travel books, leaving the occasional browser with the renewed impression of the conspicuous lack of a substantial and influential tradition of travel writing in Italian literature.

(i.iv) The Case of Moravia's Travel Books

Exceptions to this rule include Pier Paolo Pasolini's *L'odore dell'India*²⁸ and Alberto Moravia's *Un'idea dell'India*,²⁹ two volumes which were the result of a joint trip undertaken by the writers (and Moravia's wife at the time, the novelist Elsa Morante) in 1961. Moravia's African travel books, such as *Passeggiate africane*³⁰ can also occasionally be found on the shelves marked 'Viaggi' — though none of the travel sections examined included the impressive 1838-pages-long volume of Moravia's collected travel pieces, *Viaggi: Articoli 1930-90*. The case of Alberto Moravia is particularly indicative of the treatment of travel texts written by major contemporary Italian authors. Moravia travelled

²⁷ The extract appeared in 1994 in the series *I classici della scienza* of the Neapolitan publisher CUEN.

²⁸ Parma: Guanda, 1990 (1st edn Milan: Longanesi, 1962).

²⁹ Milan: Bompiani, 1994 (1st edn 1962); for information about the trip see Moravia's interview with Renzo Paris, 'L'esperienza dell'India', included in the volume, pp. xxxiii-xxxviii.

³⁰ Milan: Bompiani, 1993 (1st edn 1987). Moravia wrote a total of three books on his experience of Africa: *A quale tribù appartieni?* (Milan: Bompiani, 1972), *Lettere dal Sahara* (Milan: Bompiani, 1981) and *Passeggiate africane*; the vast majority of the material contained in these volumes had first appeared in the form of newspaper articles; for details of the genesis and publication of these volumes see Tonino Tornatore, 'Postfazione', in A. Moravia, *Viaggi: Articoli 1930-1990* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994), pp. 1797-824.

extensively, whether by personal choice or as an integral part of his work as a journalist.³¹

Among the first to instigate Moravia to travel was another Italian writer and journalist affected by incurable restlessness, Curzio Malaparte, who was the editor of *La Stampa* at the time when the newspaper published Moravia's first correspondences from England.³²

Yet, despite this 'Italian connection', Moravia has been repeatedly described as an English-style traveller, 'documentatissimo, obiettivo, che ci tiene a mantenere la distanza dovuta con il mondo che osserva'.³³ Moravia, on the other hand, indicated Stendhal and Sterne as his elective models,³⁴ and maintained that Stendhal travelled in Italy as we now travel in Africa.³⁵ By embracing famous European travellers as his models, Moravia confirmed the predominance of an imported tradition in the genre of travel writing as perceived from an

³¹ From 1930 to his death in 1990 Moravia wrote extensively for dailies such as *La Stampa*, *la Gazzetta del Popolo*, *il Popolo di Roma*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, and periodicals such as *Oggi* (which he founded in 1933 together with Pannunzio), *L'Europeo* and *L'Espresso*. In 1953 he also founded the journal *Nuovi Argomenti*, which had Calvino, Vittorini, Montale and many others among its regular contributors. Moravia's journeys were often motivated by impatience, whether with the atmosphere of fascist Italy or the inevitability of Christmas celebrations in catholic countries (see Enzo Siciliano, 'Introduzione', in A. Moravia, *Viaggi*, pp. vii-xi (pp. ix-x); T. Tornitore, 'Moravia e l'India', in A. Moravia, *Un'idea dell'India*, pp. v-xxvii (pp. xiii); Alain Elkann and A. Moravia, *Vita di Moravia* (Milan: Bompiani, 1990), p. 89), boredom ('era a New York, nel '36, e, ha raccontato, non avendo niente di meglio da fare, è andato alla Grand Central Station, ha acquistato un biglietto per il Messico, una striscia di carta lunga più di un metro, ed è partito. Quel che chiamava noia aveva vinto su tutto'; Siciliano, 'Introduzione', p. ix), or the search for the exotic and the archaic (see Siciliano, 'Introduzione', pp. viii-ix; Tornitore, 'Moravia e l'India', pp. xiii-xiv; Elkann and Moravia, *Vita di Moravia*, pp. 90-98; Dacia Maraini, 'Introduzione', in A. Moravia, *Passeggiate africane*, pp. v-x).

³² The English reportages are now collected in A. Moravia, *Viaggi*, pp. 3-59. Malaparte was the author of travel correspondences and books such as *L'intelligenza di Lenin* (Milan: Treves, 1930), *Il Volga nasce in Europa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1943), *Il sole è cieco* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1947) and the posthumous *Io, in Russia e in Cina* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1958) and *Diario di uno straniero a Parigi* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1966).

³³ The quotation is taken from Renzo Paris's interview with Moravia 'L'esperienza dell'India', p. xxxiv. According to Enzo Siciliano ('Introduzione', p. vii), Moravia displayed 'uno stile da reporter anni trenta — piuttosto un reporter di cultura anglosassone che non italiana. Grande capacità di adattamento: cura scrupolosa dell'igiene, pasti frugali, sempre pronti i disinfettanti per l'apparato digerente'. It is interesting to note that the origin of this association of Moravia with English travel is to be found in Pasolini's remarks on their joint trip to India. Pasolini's deeply personal involvement in his travelling experiences (and the revealing tone of his travel writing) thus becomes the obvious counterpart of Moravia's apparent detachment. Moravia commented on the two contrasting attitudes, explaining that what Pasolini meant by English-style traveller was mainly 'non terzomondista e sentimentale', while he qualified Pasolini as 'portato a sottolineare l'esperienza personale, privata, intima, non necessariamente culturale' (see Paris, 'L'esperienza dell'India', p. xxxv).

³⁴ 'Il primo per il suo invaghimento per i Paesi e la loro cultura, il secondo per l'attenzione al particolare anche minimo' (Paris, 'L'esperienza dell'India', p. xxxv).

Italian perspective — a predominance which is also evident in the association repeatedly drawn by fellow travellers as well as critics between Moravia's *persona* as an experienced and pragmatic traveller and the image of the paradigmatic Englishman abroad.

In his justification of the choices made when collecting travel correspondences into volumes, Moravia also shed some light on the ambiguous status held by travel writing among Italian authors. In a 1981 interview the writer explained:

...io ho riunito soltanto gli articoli che mi sembravano significativi di un certo atteggiamento. Infatti ho fatto soltanto quattro libri di viaggi [fino all'81] mentre [...] ho scritto, per es., 20 articoli sulla Cina nel '36 e non li ho mai riuniti. Poi ho scritto non so quanti articoli sul Giappone, niente, non li ho riuniti. Ho scritto un libro sull'Unione Sovietica, *Un mese in U.R.S.S.*, perchè m'interessavano il disgelo, lo stalinismo, il passaggio da una civiltà all'altra.³⁶

Moravia added that in all his travel books 'c'era un qualche motivo', a point which is taken up by the critic Tonino Tornitore:

La giustificazione autoriale è che i reportage 'sommersi' non sono retti da un' 'idea' unificatrice, da un punto di vista (culturale, morale, ideologico) 'significativo' sulla realtà esotica esplorata; per transitare in volume ci doveva essere 'un qualche motivo' o 'un certo atteggiamento'. ('Postfazione', p. 1802)

Tornitore predictably proceeds to find suitable unifying principles for each of the main travel collections published by Moravia, classifying some as 'instant-books' and others (clearly judged to be the better kind) as the result of the author's 'passione e ispirazione' for the Otherness of Africa and India ('Postfazione', p. 1802). Tornitore also notes that even before the war Moravia had thought of collecting his articles, but had apparently decided to

³⁵ See Siciliano, 'Introduzione', p. viii; significantly, in 1956 Moravia wrote the introduction to an Italian edition of Stendhal's *Passeggiate romane*.

³⁶ A. Moravia in Dario Bellezza, 'Questa è la sua Africa', *Paese Sera*, 5 December 1981, p. 15.

exclude all occasional and non fictional pieces, 'tutto ciò che avrebbe avuto un sapore giornalistico'³⁷ — a decision applauded by critics who commented that Moravia 'aveva forse inteso (da scrittore sicuro di sé) di tener distinta la sua vocazione di narratore dalla sua professione di giornalista', 'quella che è l'opera del romanzo e quella che è l'intelligenza delle cose immediate e della realtà quotidiana'.³⁸ The need to justify the publication of collected articles seems to derive only in part from the fact that these writings originally appeared in newspapers and periodicals. Further, and possibly more pressing, reasons derive from the fragmented character of the pieces and their factual and contingent nature.³⁹ However, distinguishing 'occasional' pieces from those informed by 'un qualche motivo' or 'un certo atteggiamento' is not particularly easy, nor is it always possible to trace a clear line between fictional and factual narrative, as demonstrated by Tornitore's complex account of his own selection criteria in the 'Postfazione' to Moravia's *Viaggi* (pp. 1799-1806). As a result the literary status and the generic affiliation of Moravia's travel books remains ambiguous: they are uneasily poised between 'ephemeral' journalism and 'inspired' narrative, and forever relegated to a marginal position in his work.

Yet Moravia's travel writing constitutes a substantial part of his *oeuvre*, even when we consider that he was one of the most prolific Italian writers of this century. The combination of the low status of the genre and the fame achieved by Moravia as a novelist,

³⁷ A. Moravia, in Valentino Bompiani, *Caro Bompiani: Lettere con l'editore* (Milan: Bompiani, 1988), pp. 459-60, quoted in Tornitore, 'Postfazione', p. 1801.

³⁸ The two quotations are from P. M. Milano and Carlo Bo, respectively; both are quoted by Tornitore, 'Postfazione', p. 1801.

³⁹ This impression is confirmed by the fact that the short stories known as *Racconti romani* (Milan: Bompiani, 1954) also originated as contributions to newspapers such as *La Stampa* and *Il Corriere della Sera*, yet Moravia felt no need to justify their publication as a volume, nor did his critics. For instance, there is no mention of the publication history of the stories in the critical apparatus which accompanies the current paperback edition of the collection (Milan: Bompiani, 1997), where the only hint to the newspaper connection is an incidental remark in a quotation from Moravia's discussion of the influence exercised by neorealism on his work (pp. 383-4).

however, operates a double erasure which makes his travel volumes especially invisible: because they are part of the work of a major author, who cannot be labelled as a travel writer, they are not treated as travel, and they are not included in specialist collections and series; but as travel writing they can only be classed as minor works by a major author, and as such they receive very little attention from critics and readers.⁴⁰

Moravia is also one of the most translated contemporary Italian writers, and some of his travel books have had foreign editions. *A quale tribù appartieni?*, for instance, was translated into English by Angus Davidson and appeared in 1972 as *What Tribe Do You Belong To?*⁴¹ It is an interesting paradox that this translation should have become the object of detailed analysis in Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, one of the most influential volumes of travel writing criticism to have appeared in English over the last few years. In the final chapter of her study ('From the Victoria Nyanza to the Sheraton San Salvador'), Pratt devotes a long passage to the comparison of Moravia's attitudes to Africa as expressed in *What Tribe Do You Belong To?*, and Paul Theroux's vision of Latin America in *The Old Patagonian Express*.⁴² Pratt's presentation of Moravia's and Theroux's as typical examples of 'the white man's lament' for the destruction of unadulterated exotic paradises (and of the imperial dreams associated with them) is possibly controversial, yet it is significant that Pratt should discuss the two authors together, label both of them as 'widely read canonical writers' (p. 219), and treat their two volumes as obviously belonging to the same genre as

40 The list of bibliographical references included in the 1994 edition of *Un'idea dell'India* may look impressive, but it is mostly made up of reviews and general works on Moravia; a similar list devoted to any of Moravia's novels would be substantially longer, and would include an impressive number of critical studies.

41 New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1972; UK edn London: Secker & Warburg, 1974.

42 M.L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 201-27 (pp. 216-21).

well as sharing the same status.⁴³ A similar approach is hard to imagine in the context of Italian criticism, which is still dominated by the image of Moravia as a novelist.

(i.v) The Absence of a Recent Tradition

The history and fortune of Moravia's travel writing is typical of a number of well known Italian writers of the twentieth century and their work.⁴⁴ In fact most prominent contemporary authors have written for newspapers and periodicals, whether by choice or financial necessity, and travel correspondences have been among the most common types of contribution.⁴⁵ Cecchi, Savinio, Gadda, Comisso, Alvaro, Piovene, Tobino and Parise (as well as the already mentioned Malaparte, Moravia and Pasolini, and many others) all wrote reportages, and their travel books, even when they do not directly derive from articles, bear the traces of journalistic experience. The same genesis applies to recent works such as Pier Vittorio Tondelli's collection *Un weekend postmoderno: Cronache degli anni ottanta* (which includes sections entitled 'Scenari italiani', 'Viaggi', 'America', 'Giro in provincia')⁴⁶ or Michele Serra's satirical tour of Italian seaside resorts *Tutti al mare*.⁴⁷

Women writers have also produced comparable work, and the journalistic connection is

⁴³ Pratt also qualifies Moravia and Theroux as 'postcolonial metropolitan writers' (p. 217), and as typical representatives of 'the lament of the Intellectual': "'Real" writers [who] took up the task of providing "realist" (degraded, countercommodified) versions of postcolonial reality' in competition with 'the glossy, disembodied fantasies of tourist propaganda' (p. 221). For a critical appraisal of Pratt's positions see Tim Youngs, 'Punctuating Travel: Paul Theroux and Bruce Chatwin', in *Placing Travel*, ed. by Tim Youngs, special issue of *Literature & History*, 3rd series, 6.2 (Autumn 1997), 73-88.

⁴⁴ Precedents can also be found in the nineteenth century; see the discussion of Edmondo De Amicis and his travel books below (section i.vi of this chapter).

⁴⁵ See section iii.i below for a discussion of the links between Italian journalism and travel writing.

⁴⁶ Milan: Bompiani, 1990. The volume collects articles written over a period of ten years and mostly published in newspapers and periodicals; see P. V. Tondelli, 'Avvertenza', p. 6.

⁴⁷ Milan: Feltrinelli, 1990 (1st edn Milan: Milano Libri, 1986). The pieces collected in the volume were originally published in *L'Unità* during the month of August 1985.

particularly evident, for instance, in Anna Maria Ortese's *La lente scura: Scritti di viaggio*.⁴⁸ About these and many other volumes it would be possible to trace a history parallel to the one described for Moravia's travel books. Their fortune could be shown to be marked by the same ambiguous literary status and by a similar destiny of invisibility under the label of minor works by major authors. Occasionally one of these volumes may have achieved recognition as an example of the specific genre of travel writing (as some of Moravia's work did) as a result of translation into a language whose literary tradition attaches greater value to this type of writing. Parise's travel books, for instance, such as *Cara Cina* (Milan: Longanesi, 1966), *Due, tre cose sul Vietnam* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1967), or the splendid Japanese diary *L'eleganza è frigida* (Milan: Mondadori, 1982), are not among this author's most well known works. The same is true of his letters and articles from the USA, written in 1961 and 1976, and published posthumously with the title *Odore d'America* (Milan: Mondadori, 1990). The volume is introduced by a short presentation which stresses Parise's ability to capture 'il magma metropolitano dove ribollono, esplodono e marciscono i miti, le merci, le scorie, tutto il bramato, insulso bric à brac dell'occidente',⁴⁹ but manages to avoid any reference to travel, any classification of the book as travel writing, or any identification of Parise as a travel writer. Symptomatically, the French translation of this collection is accompanied by a description closely modelled on the Italian one, with the exception of a strong emphasis on the travel credentials of

⁴⁸ Ed. by Luca Clerici (Milan: Marcos y Marcos, 1991). For all information concerning the articles collected in this volume see L. Clerici, 'Postfazione' (pp. 451-77), 'Nota ai testi' (pp. 478-502), and 'Bibliografia degli scritti giornalistici' (pp. 503-16).

⁴⁹ The quotation is taken from the back cover of the book.

Parise's text (described as 'le journal de bord de son périple américain') and an explicit qualification of the author as 'grand écrivain voyageur'.⁵⁰

Unsurprisingly, given this situation, no successful contemporary Italian author has made his or her name specifically as a travel writer. As already noted, the recent growth of interest in the genre on the part of the Italian public is characterized by the preference assigned to foreign, especially English language authors. Writers such as Bruce Chatwin and Bill Bryson have achieved cult status in Italy, while Tim Parks's semi-autobiographical accounts of an Englishman's life in the 'Belpaese', such as *Italiani*,⁵¹ are also widely read. This predominance is only partially explained by the general trend to translate a high percentage of English language works which characterizes the Italian publishing system (especially when compared with the British and American ones). On its own, the large section of the book market occupied by translations from English could not explain why there is no Italian equivalent for writers such as Chatwin and Bryson (or Eric Newby, Dervla Murphy, Jonathan Raban, Paul Theroux, and many others), whose fame both in the UK and elsewhere is based solely (or at least predominantly) on their travel books, and who are regularly labelled, whether they like it or not, as 'travel writers'. Nor can we explain why there is no Italian figure whose status and influence might be compared to those of authors such as Robert Byron or Lawrence Durrell, who are often portrayed as direct predecessors and elective mentors of the current generation of English-language travel writers.⁵²

⁵⁰ G. Parise, *Odeur d'Amérique*, trans. by Sibylle Tibertelli (Paris: Gallimard, 1994). Quotations are from the back cover of the volume.

⁵¹ Trans. by Rita Baldassarre (Milan: Bompiani, 1995); the English original is *Italian Neighbours: An Englishman in Verona* (London: William Heinemann, 1992).

⁵² On Byron see Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 79-112; on Durrell and his influence see Mark Cocker, *Loneliness and Time: British Travel Writing in the Twentieth Century* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1992), pp. 168-207.

The case of Byron, in particular, testifies to the position of British travel writing as an established genre with an ongoing tradition. The fortune of *The Road to Oxiana*, Byron's most popular book and the one acclaimed by critics as his masterpiece, is already marked by at least three different phases: its immediate success in the 1930s and 40s, its revival in the 1960s thanks to the popularity of the silk road among young travellers, and the critical acclaim following its republication in 1981 together with an enthusiastic introduction by Bruce Chatwin.⁵³ Chatwin's praise almost coincided with the 'beatification' of Byron operated by Paul Fussell, who described him as the most talented writer of his generation, and acclaimed *The Road to Oxiana* as at one and the same time the highest achievement and the swan song of the golden era of travel writing, identified by Fussell with the period between the two wars.⁵⁴ For Fussell, the premature death of Byron in the second world war becomes emblematic of the destruction of the entire ethos which had animated the great days of British travel writing: his disappearance marks the end of an era, a brutal and conclusive disjuncture (p. 219). Chatwin's essay, on the other hand, is a remarkable assertion of continuity. His introduction to a new edition of Byron's masterpiece gestures to an inheritance, a shared vision and a double endorsement: the young Chatwin (whose first book, *In Patagonia*, published in 1977, had been an instant success and had won various literary prizes) granted his seal of approval to the older author by electing him as a predecessor and personal hero; yet at the same time Chatwin was appropriating Byron's inheritance and thus inscribing his own work in a recognizable cultural and literary tradition. At once heir and re-discoverer, Chatwin mourned the loss of Robert Byron while

⁵³ B. Chatwin, 'Introduction', in R. Byron, *The Road to Oxiana* (London: Pan Books, 1981), pp. 9-15; now in B. Chatwin, *What Am I Doing Here?* (London: Picador, 1990), pp. 286-93 with the title 'A Lament for Afghanistan'. On the significance of Chatwin's introduction see M. Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 168.

⁵⁴ Fussell, *Abroad*, pp. 79-112; the essay on Byron is entitled 'Sancte Roberte, Ora Pro Nobis'; it occupies a central position and is the longest chapter in Fussell's book.

lamenting the contemporary fate of Afghanistan and stressing the renewed relevance of *The Road to Oxiana*. And his claims resulted in an image of personal and historical continuity, based on the common experience of travel and travel writing.

Gestures of this kind are impossible to find among Italian writers. The absence of an identifiable tradition makes them impossible — and the low status of travel writing as a genre makes them improbable, since they would hardly be likely to help a young author to establish his or her name, or to impress the reader with a *frisson* of recognition.

(i.vi) Collected Contemporary Travel Writing (and the Case of De Amicis)

Another particularly striking absence on the Italian shelves, by comparison with the British market, is that of anthologies and other volumes of selected travel writing. In the UK and the USA the last fifteen years have seen the publication of an increasing number of edited collections of travel writing aimed at the general (as opposed to the academic) public. The first volumes to appear were mostly general and intentionally comprehensive selections.⁵⁵ Though similar works continue to be published (*The Oxford Book of Travel Stories*, edited by Patricia Craig, was published in 1996), most recent collections tend to be built thematically, according to the kind of destinations, journeys or authors included;⁵⁶ and

⁵⁵ Among these are volumes such as *A Book of Travellers' Tales*, ed. by Eric Newby (London: Picador, 1985), *A Taste for Travel*, ed. by John Julius Norwich (London: Macmillan, 1985), *The Oxford Book of Travel Verse*, ed. by Kevin Crossley-Holland (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) and *The Norton Book of Travel*, ed. by Paul Fussell (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987). These titles only represent a sample of volumes of this kind. A detailed selected bibliography of anthologies and other types of travel writing publications in English from 1900 to 1991 can be found in M. Kowalewski, ed., *Temperamental Journeys*, pp. 315-16. Anthologies aimed at a scholarly audience are rarer, but also exist; see for instance the recent *The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italies of British Travellers. An Annotated Anthology*, ed. by Manfred Pfister (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1996).

⁵⁶ Volumes of this type include *Travels in the Americas*, ed. by Jack Newcombe (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), *Worst Journeys*, ed. by Keith Fraser (London: Picador, 1992), and the numerous collections devoted to women travel writers, including *Unsuitable for Ladies: An Anthology of Women Travellers*, ed. by

though the majority of these selections are limited to English language authors, a few translated extracts may occasionally be added.⁵⁷ Additionally, special issues and supplements devoted to travel writing have been published by journals such as *Granta* and newspapers such as the *New York Times*.⁵⁸

Publications of this kind have yet to appear in Italy. Anthologies of contemporary Italian travel writing, in particular, are virtually non-existent and the very few volumes available are highly idiosyncratic (and hardly visible). In 1993 a Florentine book shop and a local restaurant teamed up to organize a literary prize for original short stories on the theme of travel. The competition resulted in the publication of a book (*Tra viaggio e viaggiare: I migliori racconti del premio letterario Dulcamara*)⁵⁹ which includes twelve selected short stories of variable quality, style and narrative form. None of the authors in the collection was famous at the time of entering the prize or has subsequently become well known. Yet the volume is interesting for the portrait of popular attitudes, assumptions and responses which emerges from its introduction. In the four months between the launch of the prize and its adjudication the organizers received 348 entries, 40 per cent of which came from Florence, 20 per cent from the rest of Tuscany and the remaining 40 per cent from all other areas of Italy as well as from Germany and Switzerland.⁶⁰ The type of writing submitted is

Jane Robinson (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), and *The Virago Book of Women Travellers*, ed. by Mary Morris with Larry O'Connor (London: Virago Press, 1994).

⁵⁷ For instance, *The Virago Book of Wanderlust and Dreams*, ed. by Lisa St Aubin de Terán (London: Virago Press, 1998), includes a passage by the contemporary Italian writer Rosetta Loy, while Umberto Eco features among authors included in *Worst Journeys*.

⁵⁸ See for instance 'Travel Writing', ed. by Bill Buford, *Granta*, 10 (1981); a selection of the best travel writing published by *Granta* over the years has appeared in *The Best of Granta Travels* (London: Granta Books, 1991). See also M. Kowalewski, ed., *Temperamental Journeys* (p. 6 and pp. 315-16) for an exhaustive bibliography of other relevant publications.

⁵⁹ Florence: Apicelibri, 1993; all information on the competition is taken from the 'Presentazione' by Tommaso Colombini and Stefano Rolle (pp. 3-4)

⁶⁰ The success achieved by such a small initiative and the wide appeal of travel writing to the Italian public are also confirmed by the varied profile of the participants: 'autori e autrici sono divisi quasi perfettamente a

particularly significant. The organizers of the prize intentionally refrained from giving any restrictive guidelines to participants, stipulating only that works submitted should be 'racconti inediti aventi come tema il viaggio e/o il viaggiare' (p. 3). Their brief presentation spoke of 'letteratura di viaggio' as an inclusive genre, crossing time, space and language barriers (p. 3). No mention was made of possible distinctions between categories such as fictional and factual travel, autobiographical accounts and historical reconstruction, heroic adventures and mass tourism. Yet there was an insistence on 'il viaggio letterario, o letterariamente narrato' (p. 3), and as a result it comes as no surprise that the majority of the entrants should opt for 'literary' and often 'intimist' interpretations of the remit.⁶¹ In stark contrast with the travel writing published by Feltrinelli, E.D.T. or Biblioteca del Vascello, none of the pieces included in *Tra viaggio e viaggiare* has journalistic or scientific flavour and intentions, and only a minority have an even vaguely autobiographical quality (though, perhaps significantly, the winning story is among this last group).

A dramatically different and yet just as unusual collection of Italian travel writing was published in 1994 by Stampa Alternativa in their Piccola Biblioteca Millelire. The box-like cardboard cover bearing the title *Verso Oriente: Pagine di viaggio di autori italiani* reveals five miniature-size volumes, each containing an extract from a travel book by a different author: *Costantinopoli* (Milan: Treves, 1878-79) by Edmondo De Amicis, *Terra di Cleopatra* (Milan: Mondadori, 1925) by Annie Vivanti, *Verso la cuna del mondo: Lettere dall'India* (Milan: Treves, 1917) by Guido Gozzano, *Asia tragica ed immensa* (Milan:

metà; per età e professioni domina la varietà: studenti liceali e universitari, pensionati, operai, professionisti, casalinghe, ecc.' ('Presentazione', p. 3).

⁶¹ The introduction to the volume (pp. 3-4) states: 'Il genere dei racconti, pur avendo *il viaggiare* come punto centrale più o meno fondamentale, va dal classico diario di viaggio (o di bordo) allo psicologico, dall'onirico all'ecologico, dalla fantascienza all'autobiografico, dall'umoristico al tragico. Naturalmente ricorrenti tutte quelle che possono essere le interpretazioni personali del concetto di *viaggio*: fuga dal quotidiano (e soprattutto da amori finiti...); molla del ricordo e della proiezione nel passato; allontanamento dalla morte, e talvolta avvicinamento ad essa; allargamento della conoscenza di sé, e degli altri.'

Mondadori, 1940) by Mario Appelius and *Con la ciurma dell'“Alessandro”* (Milan: Ceschina, 1933) by Leonida Rèpaci. The five extracts are all edited and introduced by Angelo Maria Pellegrino, who had already contributed to Millelire, in particular with an Italian translation of Epicurus (*Lettera sulla felicità*, 1992) which became an unexpected bestseller and established the series as a fashionable provider of alternative, entertaining texts at extremely cheap price. Pellegrino's selection of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italian travel writing shares the 'antiquarian' approach already detected in the catalogue of E.D.T., but it also fits in with the image Pellegrino himself had helped to establish for the Millelire series with his translation of Epicurus: the *Verso Oriente* collection offers the general public unexpected facets of well known authors (De Amicis and Gozzano, whose names are familiar to all Italians thanks to their presence in school curricula, but whose travel writing is hardly ever mentioned in anthologies and textbooks), together with the work of a fashionably marginal woman writer (Annie Vivanti, a late-nineteenth-century poet and novelist whose work is currently being reappraised by feminist literary historians),⁶² and tastefully dated passages by totally forgotten, but consequently highly 'rediscoverable', travellers (the fascist Appelius, whose nationalist rhetoric and racist exoticism make him very topical in the current post-fascist and post-colonial cultural environment; and the more self-conscious and moderate Rèpaci, whose travel pages make a suitable counter-statement when read next to his contemporary Appelius). Yet for all their differences the five extracts have something in common: they testify to a recurrent

⁶² Annie Vivanti is one of the figures included in Elisabetta Rasy's brief survey of Italian women writers from the eighteenth century to our day in her study *Le donne e la letteratura: Scrittrici eroine e ispiratrici nel mondo delle lettere* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1984; 2nd edn 1986), a volume which constituted a significant landmark in the re-discovery of Italian women writers currently underway both in Italy and elsewhere. Rasy describes Vivanti as 'un'inglese nata da un carbonaro italiano' and places her, on the strength of her relationship with Carducci, 'in quella cultura femminile di fine secolo, in quella belle époque di donne che non riescono a percorrere fino in fondo la via dell'emancipazione e rimangono sospese tra la posizione della musa e quella della scrittrice' (p. 125).

fascination with the Orient which in Italy reached one of its historical peaks between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century; but they also confirm the close link between Italian travel writing and journalism. The four male authors in the collection either worked and travelled as professional reporters for Italian newspapers, or at least published a significant part of their travel books as journalistic reportages, as in the case of Gozzano and Rèpaci. Annie Vivanti is the sole exception to this rule: though she married an American journalist and had regular contacts with the world of newspapers, a completely different line of development is invoked for her travel writing. In his introduction Pellegrino describes Vivanti as a polyglot — born in London and raised between England, Switzerland and the United States — who travelled regularly ('fenomeno alquanto raro fra gli scrittori italiani del suo tempo') and 'con lo stile di una lady'. Her links with travel writing, then, came via the English tradition (which by the end of the nineteenth century included a vast number of women as well as men),⁶³ rather than through the journalistic connections shared by her male counterparts.

If Annie Vivanti's travel habits can be explained in the light of her English background and the widespread stereotype of the British woman-traveller, the case of Edmondo De Amicis is at once exceptional and emblematic in the narrow panorama of Italian travel writing. To date, he is the most famous Italian writer whose works have been re-published in current travel writing series. Now mostly remembered (and often reviled) for the sentimental and rhetorical moralism of *Cuore* (1886), De Amicis was in fact also a much sought after journalist and reporter.⁶⁴ He wrote a wealth of travel books which were

⁶³ See John Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion: Victorians and Edwardians in the South* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 77-78.

⁶⁴ On De Amicis as a travel writer see for instance Francesco Surdich, 'I libri di viaggio di Edmondo De Amicis', *Erodoto*, 7.8 (Sept. 1984), 25-49; and Claudio Asciuti, 'Il viaggio in Spagna di Edmondo De Amicis: Cultura, politica e sessualità rimossa', *Miscellanea di storia delle esplorazioni*, 14.24 (1989), 157-74.

very popular at the time of their publication and many of which have recently been reprinted.⁶⁵ It was precisely due to the journalistic associations of this kind of work, however, that De Amicis was attacked by Benedetto Croce as a superficial and reductively descriptive author.⁶⁶ The current reappraisal of De Amicis is based on a reversal of such judgements and on a reassessment of the relative value attributed to the different components of his production, a procedure made particularly evident by Angelo Maria Pellegrino in his introduction to the Millelire extract from *Costantinopoli*:

Grava [su De Amicis] il giudizio di Croce sul suo trapasso da ufficiale dell'esercito e scrittore dei racconti di *La vita militare* a giornalista viaggiatore. "Se fosse stato un pensatore avrebbe continuato a lavorare su problemi che la realtà offre al pensiero. Ma egli era, invece, nient'altro che un moralista, un educatore, cui veniva meno, per momento, la materia, se non l'uditorio. Descrittore in ozio, eccolo in giro *quaerens quem devoret*, ossia *quid describet*. E pei scrittori in ozio è sempre pronto il libro di viaggio." È la posizione di un antiavviatore com'era il Croce, comune a quasi tutta la cultura italiana, almeno a quella del tempo.⁶⁷

Pellegrino invokes Croce's criticism only to refute it: Croce (and the whole Italian culture as well the critical school associated with him) was wrong in his assessment of De Amicis because of his negative attitude to travel and, consequently, to travel writing. By implication, the Italian public of the 1990s will be able to appreciate the value of De Amicis's forgotten works because it is no longer bound by reverence to the Crocean tradition, but also because it has transformed its collective attitude to travel. The accusation

⁶⁵ Besides the already mentioned Millelire extract there have been full reprints of works such as *Spagna* (Padova: Franco Muzzio, 1993) and *Sull'Oceano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1996), as well as abridged publications as in the case of *Costantinopoli* (Milan: Touring Club Italiano, 1997) and a volume of selected extracts, *Se un dì un viaggiatore...*, ed. by Bruno Rombi (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1994).

⁶⁶ B. Croce, 'Edmondo De Amicis', *La Letteratura della Nuova Italia*, 2nd rev. edn, 4 vols (Bari: Laterza, 1921-1922), I, pp. 161-80; for an up-to-date bibliography of De Amicis and of Italian criticism on his work see Folco Portinari, 'Prefazione', in E. De Amicis, *Sull'oceano*, pp. xv-xxvii (pp. xxiv-xxvii).

⁶⁷ A. M. Pellegrino, 'Introduzione', in E. De Amicis, 'Da Costantinopoli', in *Verso Oriente*, pp. 3-4 (p. 3); the quotation is from B. Croce, 'Edmondo De Amicis', p. 165.

of mere descriptivism is similarly refuted after the quotation of Dossi's scathing evaluation of *Costantinopoli*:

Grava infine su De Amicis il giudizio che dava Carlo Dossi in *Note Azzurre* di *Costantinopoli*: "È un bel inventario. Delle tre cose che nel lettore dovrebbe sempre contentare l'autore — cioè occhi, cuore e cervello — De Amicis non soddisfa che la prima. E certamente ei non vede se non la somma pelle di tutto."

Invece il De Amicis scrittore di libri di viaggio, [...], è quello che ancora oggi si può leggere con interesse e anche con una certa ammirazione per la sua capacità di lessico e la colorita vivacità, anche bozzettistica, che anima ogni pagina. Ce ne fossero ancora descrittori come lui!⁶⁸

In the final sentence of his introduction Pellegrino further develops his refutation of Croce's and Dossi's verdicts, maintaining that rather than expressing the combination of De Amicis's moralism and lack of inspiration, *Costantinopoli* and the other travel books stand out in his production because 'la necessità estetica insita nel viaggiare ogni tanto gli ha concesso di sollevarsi dai suoi obblighi di moralista di un'Italietta che oggi stentiamo a credere sia mai esistita' (p. 4).⁶⁹ Yet this latest reversal of past judgements shows how near Pellegrino still is to a Crocean position: it is by assigning an aesthetic quality to the experience of travel and to its textual products, by pointing out their lexical richness and stylistic mastery, that he can affirm their right to be rescued from oblivion.

Similar ambiguities emerge from the critical apparatus which accompanies the edition of De Amicis's *Sull'Oceano*, recently published in the series I grandi libri Garzanti. In his profile of the author, Franco Custodi describes the travel books in terms which are an

⁶⁸ Pellegrino, pp. 3-4; Pellegrino is quoting from Carlo Dossi, *Note Azzurre* (Milan: Treves, 1912).

⁶⁹ The same device, a revaluation achieved through the inversion of previously undisputed assumptions and value judgements, is also used by Umberto Eco in his 'Elogio di Franti': a reading of *Cuore* which transforms the villain into the hero of the book; see U. Eco, *Diario minimo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1988; 1st ed. 1963), pp. 85-96.

echo of Pellegrino's words and of their ambiguous relationship to the critical inheritance of the 'antiviaggiatore' Croce:

Quanto ai libri di viaggio, [...], va subito detto che sono di piacevolissima lettura e di sicura attualità: per un viaggiatore curioso e intelligente, essi sono ancora oggi un'utile e gradevole "guida". D'altronde per un colorista e un bozzettista come De Amicis, l'andare in giro per il mondo è un'ottima occasione per sviluppare il piacere di raccontare aneddoti e descrivere paesaggi, situazioni, incontri: la vivacità si accresce e l'occhio ha di che pascersi "dal vero". Ne scaturiscono pagine con una gran quantità di "cose" accostate e raccontate con varietà di ritmi, da quello disteso e paesaggistico a quello concitato e paratattico dei racconti d'azione.⁷⁰

There are clear echoes in this passage of Dossi's 'bel inventario' and Croce's 'descrittore in ozio', and although these labels are turned into positive rather than negative attributes, Custodi's endorsement remains half-hearted and hesitant: any mention of the factuality of the travel book is bracketed by quotation marks ("guida", "cose", "dal vero") which imply an unusual, partly improper or figurative use of the expressions;⁷¹ there is a defensive tone in the opening sentence, with its reassurance that De Amicis's travel books are still readable; and the assertion that they are still of interest, especially for the more discerning traveller, highlights the expectation that travel books, unlike other narrative, should normally be ephemeral.

The reservations concerning the literary status and the shelf-life of travel writing which transpire from Custodi's profile help to explain the line taken by Folcò Portinari in his introduction to the same volume. The strategy adopted by the critic is to distinguish *Sull'Oceano* from the travel books written by De Amicis and to place it firmly among his

⁷⁰ Franco Custodi, 'La vita e le opere', *Sull'Oceano*, pp. vii-xiv (pp. viii-ix).

⁷¹ In the paragraph immediately preceding the one just quoted, Custodi uses the same technique to tone down the definition of journalist attached to De Amicis: 'mentre il "giornalista" è in Spagna per la fiorentina *Nazione* [...] esce la seconda raccolta di racconti' (p. viii).

novelistic production. The opening paragraph of Portinari's essay is entirely devoted to this operation:

Sull'Oceano gode di una considerazione particolare, che rende ambigua la sua identità. A qual "genere" attribuirlo? D'istinto la tentazione sarebbe quella di collocarlo nel comparto dei libri di viaggio, accanto a *Spagna e Olanda*. Non è forse il resoconto di un viaggio in Sudamerica? D'accordo, ma anche *La carrozza di tutti* si presenta come il rapporto di un viaggiatore tramviario, eppure è un romanzo a tutti gli effetti, un romanzo con le stigmate deamicisiane. Allo stesso modo di *Sull'Oceano* che, a nostro parere, è appunto un romanzo a pieno titolo, per quel che valgono queste appartenenze.⁷²

Despite Portinari's rhetorical closing remark, taxonomies must be important to him, since he repeatedly returns to the question of the genre affiliation of *Sull'Oceano*. The voyage undertaken by De Amicis in 1884 on a ship taking mostly Italian emigrants to South America is seen as the inspiration, rather than the subject matter, of the book — and the intervening creative distance is deemed to be marked, for instance, by the fact that De Amicis changed the name of the ship from Nord-America to Galileo (p. xv). The resemblance between the opening scenes of the narrative and a reportage is noted only in order to point out that the journalistic tone is soon forgotten as 'il servizio giornalistico si muta nel progetto di raccontare la condizione umana' (p. xx). The descriptive, factual nature of the text is eventually resolved as a quality of its prose:

Una propensione documentaristica è sempre rilevabile anche nelle pagine narrative di De Amicis, come un sicuro ancoraggio al reale. [...] Per esempio ancora una volta dobbiamo apprezzare le qualità scopiche, di un occhio acutissimo, che si accompagnano con la vocazione di ritrattista e bozzettista a punta secca e sono il segno di riconoscimento della migliore scrittura deamicisiana: sulla Galileo c'è di che sbizzarrirsi, con quel campionario sottomano. (pp. xxi-xxii)

⁷² F. Portinari, 'Prefazione', p. xv.

The continuing resistance of the Italian critical tradition to a full appreciation of travel writing is thus fully evident in the critical apparatus of this recent edition of *Sull'Oceano*. Portinari's approach may be unsurprising, given the need to present the book as a suitable addition to *I grandi libri Garzanti*: the strategy adopted by E.D.T. and other small publishers for the Italian volumes in their travel series ('resurrecting' the work of minor, often unwriterly authors in a marginal genre) would have been inappropriate given the fame enjoyed by De Amicis and the editorial policy of the series. Yet the same reservations are implicit in the introductions written by Pellegrino for the *Verso Oriente* collection, confirming the ambiguous status of travel writing even among those Italian publishers and critics who are intent upon reviving it.

(i.vii) Collections of Earlier Travel Writing

At the opposite end of the spectrum from the Millelire volumes, both in terms of content selection, critical approach and target public, stand scholarly retrospective collections devoted to Italian travel writing of past centuries. A suitable example is the two-volume *Scopritori e viaggiatori del Cinquecento* published in the *Classici Ricciardi-Mondadori* series.⁷³ The material contained in these volumes had first appeared as tome one of Volume 40 of *La letteratura italiana: Storia e testi*, a collection started by Ricciardi in 1951, which by 1996 included eighty-nine scholarly works. The volumes on travel writing were originally published in 1991, quite late in the plan of the series, yet they were selected for

⁷³ *Scopritori e viaggiatori del Cinquecento*, ed. by Ilaria Luzzana Caraci, 2 vols (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi-Mondadori, 1996).

nearly immediate republication in the joint Ricciardi-Mondadori version, perhaps in recognition of the growing interest in the genre.⁷⁴ The volumes have a scholarly character, confirmed by the extensive apparatus of footnotes, glossaries and indexes, as well as by the great care taken in ensuring the philological accuracy of the texts included in the selection. The introduction by Ilaria Luzzana Caraci stresses the importance of Italian travellers for the history of exploration and the primacy of Italian writers and printers in making the new discoveries available to the reading public. Luzzana Caraci also laments the traditional lack of interest for Renaissance Italian travel literature ('letteratura odeporica'), an observation echoed on the cover of the volume, where the following claim is made:

La letteratura italiana di viaggio è stata a lungo, e a torto, trascurata: sono poche le edizioni critiche, scarni i commenti e gli studi storici e linguistici. Questa silloge presenta per la prima volta un'ampia scelta di relazioni di viaggio secondo una lezione accuratamente accertata, e corredata di un commento puntuale e attento sia ai dati storico-geografici sia ai fatti linguistici.⁷⁵

Notwithstanding the claim to be filling a gap in the critical recognition of Italian travel *literature*, the editors distinctly treat the texts in the collection as historical documents rather than literary products. The introduction only marginally touches upon the textual dimension of travel literature, pointing out the distinction between 'lettera familiare', 'lettera ufficiale', 'diario' and 'relazione' as the main forms to be encountered in the collection. Elsewhere in the volumes, the philological accuracy and the attention to

⁷⁴ The approach taken by the editors of the travel writing collection reflects the conception of national culture and literary tradition which animates the whole Ricciardi-Mondadori initiative. The original ethos of the Ricciardi series was described as an invitation to re-read the classics of Italian literature in 'tempi torbidi e incerti', 'per ritrovarsi a vivere in quella tradizione umanistica che è la nostra tradizione di libertà' (I, p.653). In republishing the best volumes of the original catalogue (including those devoted to Dante, Cellini, Foscolo and the collected *Poeti del Duecento*), the new Ricciardi-Mondadori series embraces the same ethos, but also declares the intention of making the Italian literary tradition available to a larger public.

⁷⁵ The quotation is taken from inside the front cover.

biographical and bibliographical detail are only occasionally matched by attention to the quality of the writing, to intertextual connections and influences, or to the link between travel writing and other literary genres of the period.⁷⁶

Similar approaches are to be found in other collections devoted to Italian travel writing from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century — which, though not numerous, do actually exist. UTET's *Classici italiani*, for instance, includes the volume *Viaggiatori del Seicento* (Turin: 1967). The editor, Marziano Guglielminetti, remarks on the absence of critical studies of Italian travel writing in general and of 'i problemi particolari della prosa di viaggio' in particular.⁷⁷ Guglielminetti opens his introduction by remarking on the influence exercised by travel and travel writing on many literary genres of the Baroque period. Yet according to him the link is indirect and purely conventional:

In particolare la tragedia, la commedia, il romanzo e la novella amano sovente servirsi del viaggio per allargare la scena della loro azione, cogliere i personaggi in situazioni imprevedibili; lusingare la fantasia del lettore con la presenza di paesaggi remoti e favolosi. È facile accorgersi, però, che l'origine di questo continuo movimento nello spazio non deriva da un'autentica esperienza di viaggiatori; [...] La convenzionalità di questo schema narrativo appare evidente solo se si ha il coraggio e la pazienza di esaminare i testi contemporanei della prosa di viaggio.⁷⁸

Coming from the editor of a collection of seventeenth-century Italian travel writing, the admission that it takes courage and patience to read those same texts is rather surprising. When taken together with the rest of Guglielminetti's introduction, which immediately shifts from a literary to a historical focus, this initial assessment of the relationship between

⁷⁶ Some attention is devoted to such issues in the introduction to Columbus's writing, but not, for instance, in those devoted to Vespucci (I, pp. 3-21 and pp. 201-17 respectively).

⁷⁷ M. Guglielminetti, 'Nota bibliografica', pp. 59-60 (p. 59); see this bibliography for repertoires and histories of Italian travel written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

⁷⁸ M. Guglielminetti, 'Introduzione', pp. 7-57 (p. 9).

travel writing and other types of literature has the effect of suggesting that the material included in the collection should be read as a secondary source for the study of more canonical genres — an impression confirmed by the concluding lines of the introduction, with their contention that seventeenth-century travellers ‘per vie neglette, ai margini della letteratura ufficiale, testimoniano le paure e le confusioni di una società incapace di liberarsi definitivamente dai vincoli della tradizione dogmatica ed assolutistica’.⁷⁹

A similar documentary and historical focus characterizes the earlier *Letterati, memorialisti e viaggiatori del Settecento* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1951), edited by Ettore Bonora. The selection criteria adopted by Bonora also highlight how the connection between Italian travel writing and journalism is not restricted to contemporary authors and texts, nor does it start with such late-nineteenth-century figures as De Amicis. Rather, the association between these two types of writing is perceived as an essential element from the very inception of Italian journalism.⁸⁰ Bonora’s collection is divided into three separate sections, respectively devoted to ‘Letterati’, ‘Memorialisti’ and ‘Viaggiatori’; yet the subdivision hardly conceals the many overlapping areas between the three groups. Giuseppe Baretti, for instance, is included among the ‘letterati’, yet he is the creator of *La Frusta letteraria* (one of the most influential periodicals of the eighteenth century) as well as a

⁷⁹ Guglielminetti, ‘Introduzione’, p. 57. A historical and documentary approach is also to be found in *Viaggiatori del Settecento*, ed. by Leonello Vincenti (Turin: UTET, 1950). And the same attitude to travel writing opens the chapter ‘Viaggiatori, memorialisti, poesia didascalica e satirica’ in *La letteratura italiana per saggi storicamente disposti: Il Seicento e il Settecento*, ed. by Lanfranco Caretti and Giorgio Luti (Milan: Mursia, 1972; pp. 443-72): ‘I libri e le cronache di viaggio non costituiscono, nella prospettiva del Settecento italiano, un vero e proprio genere letterario; piuttosto si presentano come un documento rilevante del costume culturale di un’epoca, anche se logicamente seguono spesso moduli stilistici assai diversi. Si tratta per la maggior parte di letteratura d’occasione, nata spesso ai margini di scritti di maggior impegno, cosicché molti autori che ci hanno lasciato pur notevoli relazioni di viaggio occupano una posizione ben più importante come pensatori, critici, poeti, traduttori’ (p.443).

⁸⁰ In the seventeenth and eighteenth century the word ‘letterato’ frequently referred to journalists, who were often producing what would now be called literary journalism; for a discussion of the uses of the term see Luigi Piccioni, ‘Introduzione’, in *Giornalismo letterario del Settecento*, ed. by L. Piccioni (Turin: UTET, 1949), pp. 9-19 (pp. 9-10); see also p. 23 for further bibliographical references.

crucial figure in the development of Italian travel writing. Baretti spent most of his life in England, and became involved in a famous controversy with Samuel Sharp, author of those *Letters from Italy* (1766) whose bad-tempered protagonist also became the object of Sterne's satire in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768). Baretti's *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768) is a defence of the country and its people against the unsympathetic observations of travellers such as Sharp. As such the *Account* does not qualify as a travelogue, and can be only indirectly associated with travel writing. Baretti, however, also wrote *Lettere familiari a' suoi tre fratelli*, an epistolary account of travels in France, Spain and Portugal first published in 1762.⁸¹ The *Lettere* constituted one of the most influential contributions to the travel genre in eighteenth-century Italy, and shared with Baretti's writings for *La Frusta letteraria* an affinity with the cultural ideals and the literary models of Augustan England.⁸² Significantly, Bonora's selection of Baretti's work includes both a series of journalistic articles and extracts from his *Lettere familiari*, and the biographical profile which precedes the texts gives ample space to the mediating role played by Baretti between English and Italian culture (pp. 469-77). Yet for Bonora, Baretti remains essentially a 'letterato', not a travel writer.

This brief analysis of the volumes edited by Luzzana Caraci, Guglielminetti and Bonora, illustrates how in scholarly, retrospective collections travel writing continues to be

⁸¹ The *Lettere* are the partial account of a trip undertaken by Baretti as the tutor of young British aristocrat. An English edition, with additional observations concerning travels in France and Flanders in 1770 was published in London in 1770-71 with the title *A Journey from London to Genoa through England, Portugal, Spain and France*.

⁸² See Luca Clerici, 'La letteratura di viaggio', in *Manuale di letteratura italiana: Storia per generi e problemi, III: Dalla metà del Settecento all'Unità d'Italia*, ed. by Franco Brioschi and Costanzo di Girolamo (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995), pp. 590-610 (pp. 591-93) and, in the same volume, F. Brioschi, 'Critica e storia letteraria', pp. 752-801 (pp. 763-65). Baretti has recently been described by Manfred Pfister (*The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 468) as 'the most important mediator between England and Italy in the second half of the eighteenth century'. While Pfister focuses on Baretti's contribution to the spread of Italian culture in England, Bonora (pp. 471-72) also highlights the influence exercised on Baretti's Italian production by his experiences in London.

relegated to a marginal position in the tradition of Italian literature and is assumed to be of interest only to scholars or very patient readers. As a consequence, the textual qualities of the works included in these selections are either effaced or subordinated to their documentary value.⁸³ The same set of attitudes and assumptions which characterizes these scholarly volumes may help to explain the absence of similar collections devoted to contemporary Italian travel writing. The association of the genre with the history of geographical explorations on the one hand and with the development of journalism on the other, favours a historical and documentary approach to travel writing which in turn militates against the development of scholarly criticism of contemporary works. These are perceived as too ephemeral and not 'literary' enough to deserve attention for their own sake, but also as too recent and contingent to be worth collecting for their historical value or for their (secondary) role in the development of an Italian tradition.

(i.viii) Italian Travel Writing and the Development of the Novel

The preferential association between Italian journalism and travel writing, in particular, may also be connected to the alleged late development of the Italian novel — the novel being the genre most commonly associated with travel writing in the Anglo-Saxon

⁸³ This kind of critical approach is clearly not limited to Italian texts; the volume *Notizie di viaggi lontani: L'esplorazione extraeuropea nei periodici del primo ottocento. 1815-1845* (Milan: Guida, 1984), edited by Maurizio Bossi and sponsored by the Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario G. P. Viesseux, reproduces, in the original language, selected extracts from four European periodicals which regularly published articles by and on explorers and travellers. The intention of the collection (as well as the aim of the introductions to the various sections) is to document the impact of geographical exploration on nineteenth-century European culture. No specific attention is devoted, though, to the textual features of the extracts. Examples of the opposite approach can be found in the already mentioned series *I cento viaggi*. Franco Marengo's introduction to his edition of Thomas Coryat's *Crudezze* (pp. 19-38) combines punctual historical and biographical information with a subtle discussion of the structure and style of the text, its relationship with earlier and later travel writing, as well as the connections which can be drawn between this and other genres of the period.

tradition.⁸⁴ The theory of the absence of an early Italian novel has been challenged over the last few decades, and critics have unveiled a wealth of seventeenth-century narrative prose and revealed the vast popularity of novels in Italy as well as their frequent translation into foreign languages. Albert Mancini has explained the lack of attention to the genre on the part of previous scholars with views (mainly originating in the nineteenth century) of 'the post-Renaissance period as a time of negligible literary achievement'.⁸⁵ In fact, as pointed out by Mancini, early Italian novels included works characterized by the 'confluence of several literary traditions', among which were 'the picaresque novel, the Lucianic dialogue, biography, chronicle' and others.⁸⁶ One of the European bestsellers of the time was Giovanni Paolo Marana's *Esploratore turco*; first published in Paris in 1684 as *L'espion du Grand Seigneur* this book 'inaugurated [a] sub-genre of the modern novel, the pseudo-foreign-letter or spy-fiction' (p. 322), and inspired, among others, Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*.⁸⁷ Marana's volume is thus directly linked to the development of at least one type of novel closely connected with the theme of travel and the popularity of travel writing, but its influence is mostly confined to European countries other than Italy. Even Mancini admits that in Italy 'the Baroque novel turned out to be a literary dead-end' and early success was followed by 'the stagnation in the production of fiction during the late

⁸⁴ The relationship between the two genres is the subject of Percy G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983).

⁸⁵ Albert N. Mancini, 'Narrative Prose and Theatre', in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, ed. by Peter Brand and Lino Pertile (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 318-35 (p. 318). See also Mancini's articles 'Il romanzo nel Seicento: Saggio di bibliografia', *Studi secenteschi*, 11 (1970), 205-74; and *Studi secenteschi*, 12 (1971), 443-98; and 'Il romanzo italiano nel Seicento: Saggio di bibliografia delle traduzioni in lingua straniera', *Studi secenteschi*, 26 (1985), 101-39.

⁸⁶ Mancini, 'Narrative Prose and Theatre', p. 322.

⁸⁷ For a discussion of the genesis and influence of Marana's work see Arthur J. Weitzman, 'Introduction', in G. P. Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*, selected and edited by A. J. Weitzman (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. vii-xix (p. xi). On the importance of Marana's work and its influence see also Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', in *Storia d'Italia*, 6 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1972-76), III, pp. 985-1481 (p. 999); and Guido Almansi, 'L'esploratore e la genesi del romanzo epistolare pseudo-orientale', *Studi secenteschi*, 7 (1966), 35-65.

seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries'.⁸⁸ By the time Manzoni began to work on what was to become *I promessi sposi*, the Italian novel lagged far behind its French or English counterparts, partly because of the lack of a large bourgeois readership and partly because of the low status of the genre, attacked by Italian critics on both formal and moral grounds.⁸⁹ These circumstances may explain why Italy does not have books such as *Gulliver's Travels*, *Robinson Crusoe* or *Tom Jones*, classic novels which are strongly indebted to the themes, forms and imagery of travel writing; or why there is no equivalent in the modern Italian canon for Stendhal's *Promenades dans Rome* or Goethe's *Italianische Reise*, well known travel books written by renowned novelists. The precise relationship between the late development of the Italian novel and the marginality of travel writing is, however, far from easy to ascertain. Should we, for instance, interpret the lack of a prominent production of novels in eighteenth-century Italian literature as the result of a similar lack of travel writing, and, as a consequence, take the late development of the novel as further proof of the absence of great travel books? Or should we rather presume that the 'absence' of the novel (a core genre from the perspective of contemporary literary historiography), favours the persisting association of Italian travel writing with other minor genres (such as journalism, the autobiographical memoir or the essay), and thus also acts as an impediment to the recognition of the literary nature of travel writing, ultimately contributing to the persistent confinement of the genre to a marginal position? In other

⁸⁸ Mancini, 'Narrative Prose and Theatre', p. 319.

⁸⁹ On the late development of Italian bourgeois novels see for instance Franco Brioschi and Costanzo Di Girolamo, 'I generi', in *Manuale di letteratura italiana*, pp. 218-26 (p. 225-6); in the same volume, Luca Toschi, 'Forme e temi del romanzo settecentesco', pp. 387-96 (pp. 387-89); see also Giovanni Carsaniga, 'The Age of Romanticism (1800-1870)', in *The Cambridge History of Italian Literature*, ed. by P. Brand and L. Pertile, pp. 399-456 (pp. 431-34). On the relationship between Italian and other European traditions see the detailed analysis of the 'mercato del romanzo' in Franco Moretti, *Atlante del romanzo europeo*, pp. 145-202. Moretti uses quantitative methods to show the lines of influence which, from France and Britain, lead to the development of the genre in other national literatures — usually through the means of translation.

words, was the lack of a travel genre one of the effective causes of the late development of the Italian novel, or is the absence of a more significant link with the novel simply an impediment to the recognition of Italian travel writing as a 'proper' genre?

As in the case of contemporary Italy, so past centuries reveal a wealth of 'Italian' travel writing once one starts looking for it.⁹⁰ Marco Polo's *Il milione* (1298) and Columbus's *Diario* (1492-93) constitute two unconventional yet significant archetypes for the genre. Both texts were not written in Italian and belong to a Western rather than strictly national tradition.⁹¹ Both works also highlight fundamental characteristics of travel writing, such as its links with autobiography and the issue of its factual or fictional nature. And, paradoxically, both can also be described as absent archetypes of an invisible genre: in both cases the original manuscript has been lost and the text is only available in versions which have undergone multiple translations and manipulations.⁹² Among other early Italian works are Ramusio's monumental collection *Navigazioni e viaggi* (1550-59), and accounts written by explorers, merchants diplomats and clergy, such as Sassetti's *Lettere da vari paesi* (1570-1588), Pigafetta's *Relazione del Reame di Congo* (1596), Carletti's *Ragionamenti del mio viaggio intorno al mondo* (1606) and Della Valle's *Viaggi* (1663). The eighteenth century marked an increase in the number of Italians who travelled in Europe and in the popularity of travel literature, often written in the form of letters, as in the case of Baretti's

⁹⁰ The word 'Italian' has to be used carefully here since it cannot refer to a contemporary concept of national literature, in a period in which even the notion of an Italian 'nation' would constitute a serious anachronism.

⁹¹ Mary B. Campbell, in *The Witness and the Other World: Exotic European Travel Writing, 400-1600* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988) call's Polo's text 'the collaborative effort of a whole culture' or 'a letter to Europe' (pp. 92-93), and discusses Columbus in similar terms (p. 169).

⁹² For philological details on Polo's and Columbus's writings and their vicissitudes see Campbell, 92-112 and pp. 165-209. On Polo see also Luigi Foscolo Benedetto, 'Introduzione: La tradizione manoscritta', in Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, ed. by L. F. Benedetto (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1928), pp. ix-ccxxi. Further information and bibliography on Columbus can be found in *Scopritori e viaggiatori del Cinquecento*, ed. by I. Luzzana Caraci, pp. 1-197.

Lettere familiari (1762-63), Algarotti's *Viaggi di Russia* (1764) or Pietro and Alessandro Verri's *Viaggio a Parigi e Londra* (1766-67). Scientists like Alessandro Volta (*Relazione del viaggio in Svizzera*, 1777) and Lazzaro Spallanzani (*Viaggio nelle due Sicilie e in alcune parti dell'Appennino*, 1792) also wrote accounts of their travels, while autobiographies such as Casanova's *Memoirs* (written between 1791 and 1796) or Alfieri's *Vita* (1806) share many features with travelogues. The Napoleonic wars brought along restrictions on travel, but the nineteenth century eventually became a new age of explorations, and Italian travel writing acquired a stronger taste for the adventurous and the exotic as well as the descriptive and learned. At the end of the century Edmondo De Amicis and Emilio Salgari marked the two opposite directions in which the genre would move: Salgari's exotic adventures transported the Italian public into a fantastic and entirely fictional dimension, while De Amicis' reportages, as noted above, announced the renewed links between twentieth-century Italian travel writing and the Italian press.⁹³

Such a rich and varied collection of texts suggests that, just like their twentieth-century successors, travel books were far from being absent from the Italian literary panorama from the early Renaissance to the Enlightenment and the romantic period. Even if the production of Italian travel accounts did not achieve the peaks of eighteenth-century England (where this type of publication outnumbered any other kind except, perhaps, novels),⁹⁴ it represented a significant genre. Yet a combination of factors, including the early association between travel and journalism and the late development of the Italian

⁹³ For a sample of early Italian travellers and their written accounts see the already mentioned collections edited by Luzzana Caraci and Guglielminetti; a brief outline of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century developments is in A. N. Mancini, 'Narrative Prose and Theatre', pp. 324-25; a critical survey of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century production can be found in L. Clerici, 'La letteratura di viaggio'.

⁹⁴ See Charles L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1978), p. 1.

novel, determined the invisibility of the Italian travel writing tradition, at best confining it, to this day, to the role of a useful source of historical and geographical information.

(ii) Italy as Object: Travel, Heritage and the (Re)Invention of Tradition

If volumes of selected Italian travel writing are few and far between, collections of a different type are currently appearing in Italy in increasing number. Every Italian town seems to aspire to at least one volume of collected quotations from illustrious as well as obscure travellers who visited the place in the course of their tour of the peninsula. These are volumes specifically devoted to travel in relation to the local heritage of cities, provinces or regions. They are inspired by the cult of the past and the celebration of the *genius loci*, and are part of a fashionable rush to establish or renew the international credentials of a specific location (as well as, or in alternative to, those of Italy as a whole) and to support its claims to a share of tourist income. Tourist promotion, national mythologizing and local pride coincide in the effort to uncover and celebrate the images imposed upon locality after locality by the gaze of the traveller and his (or sometimes her) appreciation of landscape, art, history, or local colour. Local authorities, banks, and publishers often team-up in the production of volumes which range from collections of selected extracts, to monographic studies interspersed with innumerable quotations, to reproductions of old guide-books and travel diaries.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ It is impossible to offer here even an initial inventory of such publications, which have grown exponentially over the last twenty years and are currently being incremented by a flurry of attention to religious as well as lay pilgrimages on the eve of the Holy Year celebrations which will coincide with the millennium. A purely random sample might include *Cortona nelle pagine di viaggiatori stranieri*, ed. by Attilio Brilli (Cortona: Calosci, 1986); Miryam Cabiddu, *Viaggiatori inglesi dell'800 in Sardegna* ([n.p.]: ESA, 1980); *Viaggi e viaggiatori del Settecento in Emilia Romagna*, ed. by Giorgio Cusatelli (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986); Emanuele Kanceff and others, *Firenze dei grandi viaggiatori* (Casale Monferrato: Abete, 1993); Toto Roccuzzo, *Taormina, l'isola nel cielo: Come Taormina divenne "Taormina"* (Catania: Giuseppe Maimone Editore,

A similar growth can be noted in recent Italian criticism of travel and travel writing which has Italy as its object. During the last few years Italy has produced a considerable amount of critical studies devoted to accounts of Italy left by foreigners, from medieval pilgrims to the romantic exiles of the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ A centre for the study of travellers in Italy (C.I.R.V.I., Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia) was founded in 1980 and since then has been publishing a journal (*Bollettino del C.I.R.V.I.*) as well as a series called Biblioteca del viaggio in Italia.⁹⁷ The growth of interest in the subject was confirmed in 1982, when the prestigious *Storia d'Italia Einaudi* devoted one of its *Annali* to Italian landscape. The volume, edited by Cesare De Seta, is largely concerned with images of Italy produced by travellers.⁹⁸ De Seta was also the main instigator of the exhibition *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, shown in London and Rome in 1996-97, which marked the culmination of at least twenty years of growing interest in the subject.⁹⁹ The event was accompanied by an international congress (*Grand*

1992); the series *Le guide del Viaggiatore Raffinato* published by Edimond (Città di Castello, 1997-), which currently includes volumes on Assisi, Todi, Città di Castello, Chiusi and Montefalco; and volumes such as W. M. Gillespie, *Un americano a Roma: Guida della città. 1845*, trans. by Irene Loffredo, published in 1991 as a special edition for the Banca Popolare dell'Etruria e del Lazio.

⁹⁶ Once again, bibliographical indications will be limited to a selected sample of texts: Attilio Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte: Il romanzo del Grand Tour* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995) and, by the same author, *Il viaggiatore immaginario: L'Italia degli itinerari perduti* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1997); *Homo Viator: Nella fede, nella cultura, nella storia*, ed. by Bonita Cleri (Urbino: QuattroVenti, 1997); Raffaele De Grada and others, *Giornale di viaggio in Italia: Pittori europei in Italia nell'800. Occasioni e memorie* (Busto Arsizio: Bramante, 1985); Atanasio Mozzillo, *La frontiera del Grand Tour: Viaggi e viaggiatori nel Mezzogiorno borbonico* (Naples: Liguori, 1992); Letizia Norci Cagiano de Azevedo, *Lo specchio del viaggiatore: Scenari italiani tra Barocco e Romanticismo* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1992).

⁹⁷ The series is published in collaboration with the Geneva-based academic publishing house Slatkine.

⁹⁸ *Storia d'Italia. Annali 5: Il paesaggio*, ed. by Cesare De Seta (Turin: Einaudi, 1982); see in particular De Seta's own 'L'Italia nello specchio del Grand Tour' (pp. 125-263), Leonardo Di Mauro's 'L'Italia e le guide turistiche dall'Unità ad oggi' (pp. 367-428), and Elisabeth and Jörg Garms's 'Mito e realtà di Roma nella cultura europea: Viaggio e idea, immagine e immaginazione' (pp. 561-662).

⁹⁹ The exhibition was held at the Tate Gallery of London from October 1996 to January 1997 and subsequently at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome between February and April 1997; an extensive catalogue was published as *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1996).

Tour: Letteratura di viaggio e cultura figurativa tra XVII e XIX secolo) introduced by De Seta in the following words:

Il Grand Tour si configura come un'esperienza intellettuale che si svolge tra la metà del XVI secolo e la fine del XVIII secolo; alla formazione di questa esperienza concorrono pittori, scultori, architetti, incisori e letterati, diaristi, autori di guide. Il convegno intende essere una ricognizione sistematica su temi figurativi e letterari che sono parte della civiltà europea. La rilevanza dei testi letterari e la ricchezza iconografica si spinge ben oltre la soglia del Settecento e difatti — con tutte le differenze del caso — verranno affrontati temi che investono cronologicamente anche l'Ottocento, estrema tappa di un'avventura intellettuale che per oltre due secoli segna la cultura artistica e letteraria dell'Antico continente. Come noto l'Italia ha un posto di assoluto privilegio in questa avventura che per la prima volta vede intellettuali di ogni nazione concordi nel riconoscere al Bel Paese un primato nella formazione della classe dirigente dei rispettivi paesi. Il viaggio di formazione diviene lentamente e progressivamente viaggio di piacere e di loisir, fino al punto in cui — con l'inaugurazione delle prime ferrovie, l'invenzione della fotografia e i primi viaggi organizzati — l'esperienza del Tour si trasforma in moderno turismo.¹⁰⁰

The elements which determine the popularity of foreign travellers and their inheritance among contemporary Italian scholars (and a large share of the general public too) are all hinted at in De Seta's words: the feeling of national pride and primacy encapsulated in the recognition of the special role played by Italy in the collective imagination of modern Europe and in the identity formation of its elites; the vision of Italy as the source of an uninterrupted tradition of good taste and artistic achievement spanning from the Renaissance to our days; and the sense of continuity between old modes of travel and more recent ones, a continuity which justifies and supports the mass tourist industry of contemporary Italy, while also allowing for a sense of nostalgia and regret for the 'good old days' when travel to the peninsula was limited to the refined and learned Grand Tourists.

¹⁰⁰ The quotation is taken from the conference programme. Only one of the contributions to the conference was devoted to Italian travellers: Elvio Guagnini, 'Il Tour degli italiani: Forme e caratteri della testimonianza odeporea tra Seicento e Ottocento'.

(ii.i) Travel to Italy and its Literature

For centuries Italy has been the subject of an identifiable tradition of texts produced by other European cultures and devoted to its description. Travellers in Italy have left a formidable corpus of documents, and have contributed to the creation and persistence of stereotypes concerning national character as well as cultural heritage. Testimonies of journeys to Italy include travelogues as well as guides and treatises of advice, diaries and letters as well as sketches, drawings, and paintings sometimes produced by the travellers and sometimes by artists who accompanied them in their journey or resided in Italy and relied on the growing number of foreign visitors to sell their work.¹⁰¹ Travellers also gathered vast collections of Italian art and memorabilia which functioned as both a souvenir of their journey and a visible proof of their taste, learning and occasional eccentricity.

Travel to Italy was at its most prestigious during the eighteenth century when the Grand Tour reached its apex, but important precursors are to be found among the pilgrims, scholars, diplomats, merchants and adventurers of the Middle Ages and of the Renaissance. Poets such as Chaucer, Milton and Sidney travelled to Italy and contributed to the spread of Italian Humanism in Britain, while travellers such as Thomas Coryate (*Coryat's Crudities*, 1611) and Fynes Moryson (*An Itinerary Written by Fynes Moryson*, 1617) were among the creators of visions of Italy which soon combined with historical and religious events to produce the stereotype of the Machiavellian Italian and the mirroring image according to which 'an Englishman Italianate is a devil incarnate'. The Grand Tour had its origins in the

¹⁰¹ The Italian Salvator Rosa, the French Nicolas Poussin and the Welsh Richard Wilson are three notable examples. On the subject see Federico Zeri, *La percezione visiva dell'Italia e degli italiani* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976).

philosophical and political changes of the sixteenth century — from the new scientific paradigms introduced by Bacon, to Cartesian rationalism, to the advent of Protestantism and the growth of nation states — which altered the patterns and purposes of travel across Europe: religious pilgrimages lost their centrality, as did the idea of a transnational Christian ecumene; the new status acquired by Northern European universities diminished the popularity and attraction of Italian institutions; and the newly formed national élites began to establish new models of national identity and cultural prestige.¹⁰²

The increasing popularity of travel to Italy affected not just Britain but also other European cultures (as testified by the tours of figures such as Montaigne, De Brosses, Goethe and Stendhal), and the first guides to the Grand Tour of Europe, such as Lassels' *Voyage of Italy* (1670) and Misson's *Nouveau voyage d'Italie* (1691) were written (and translated) in various languages. The name of 'Grand Tour' indicated a journey across Europe which, for English travellers, started with the crossing of the channel, included a visit to France, Italy, probably Germany, and possibly the Low Countries, and came to an end with a new crossing and the return home. The circularity implicit in the definition of 'Tour' is essential to this type of travel and gives the journey an initiatic quality:¹⁰³ on his return the young gentleman is ready for a diplomatic career or other types of public life; as long as, however, his journey has provided him with knowledge, but not deprived him of his national and class identity.¹⁰⁴ Gradually the Grand Tour acquired a set of codified

¹⁰² For a detailed account of these processes see A. Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, pp. 11-53; on the history and development of the Grand Tour see also Jeremy Black, *The British and the Grand Tour* (London: Croom Helm, 1985); and Christopher Hibbert, *The Grand Tour* (London: Methuen, 1987).

¹⁰³ Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ Even in the periods of highest popularity of Italy and its culture, the traveller who came back transformed, having acquired too much of the alien customs and manners, was scorned and derided. For opinions of this kind see for instance Philip Sidney, 'A Letter to the Same Purpose', in P. Sidney, *The Defence of Poesie, Political Discourses, Correspondence, Translation*, ed. by A. Feuillerat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), pp. 124-27.

practices whose construction and reproduction was an integral part of the genres associated with the Tour: travel diaries, manuals of advice and guide books produced a set narration of travel and its objects; this, thanks to the high popularity enjoyed by travel writing in the seventeenth and especially in the eighteenth century, both among active and 'armchair' travellers, influenced other realms of text and image production.¹⁰⁵

Books on the Tour were extremely popular in Britain, and by the end of the eighteenth century, after the publication of Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705), Samuel Sharp's *Letters from Italy* (1766), Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy* (1766), and innumerable other volumes, the tradition was so established that Sterne could write *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), which is both a masterpiece of travel writing and possibly its most successful parody ever. The popularity of Italian travel did not decrease over the following century,¹⁰⁶ when Italy also came to represent 'the paradise of exiles': poets such as Byron, Shelley, and Browning spent large parts of their lives on the peninsula and renewed the image of the 'Englishman Italianate'. Before them Coleridge, Wordsworth and Gray had all made their own tours, leaving testimonies of their visits to Italy either in their works or in private correspondence and diaries. Women also constituted a significant group among travellers to Italy, and by the end of the nineteenth century their number surpassed that of male tourists. Some of the travel accounts written by women, such as those left by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

¹⁰⁵ See studies of the link between travel writing and the rise of the novel, such as P. G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* and C. L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*; the specific link between the image of Italy in travel writing and in other literary genres is the object of Roderick Marshall, *Italy in English Literature. 1755-1815: Origins of the Romantic Interest in Italy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934).

¹⁰⁶ According to C. P. Brand an average of four travel books on Italy was published every year in the 1840s, and in 1879 John Addington Symonds could claim that Italy was as influential then as it had been for the culture and literature of Elizabethan England; see C. P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics: The Italianate Fashion in Early Nineteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 17; and J. A. Symonds, *Sketches and Studies in Italy* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1879), p. 185.

(1689-1762), Esther Lynch Piozzi (1741-1821), Frances Trollope (1780-1863) or Vernon Lee (1856-1935), are among the most detailed and perceptive. And women could also be very successful travel writers, judging from books such as Mariana Starke's *Letters from Italy* (1800) which was among the most popular guides of its century and underwent continuous rewritings and editions. The flow of scholars, artists, art-lovers and eccentrics continued with Ruskin, Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Vernon Lee, Norman Douglas, Hilaire Belloc, as well as Americans such as Mark Twain, Henry James, Edith Wharton, and many others.¹⁰⁷ In more recent years a number of British authors have published travel books on Italy (among them Jan Morris, Eric Newby and Duncan Fallowell) and in each case it is possible to trace links between contemporary works and established traditions.¹⁰⁸

To these figures and works one must add a whole catalogue of critical literature on the subject of the voyage to Italy and, more generally, of the influence exercised by Italy across Europe.¹⁰⁹ All of these volumes promote a canon of writing inspired by Italy and focus on the images and representations (positive or negative) to be encountered not only in travel books and diaries but also in picaresque and gothic novels, plays, treatises on art and politics, and many other textual genres.

¹⁰⁷ Pemble (*The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 39-40) estimates that already in the 1840s there were more American than British travellers in Italy.

¹⁰⁸ See M. Pfister, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty* for details on these and other contemporary authors who have written about their travels in Italy.

¹⁰⁹ Studies of Anglo-Italian relations include (to name only a few full length publications) Camillo von Klenze, *The Interpretation of Italy during the Last Two Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907); R. Marshall, *Italy in English Literature*; Van Wyck Brooks, *The Dream of Arcadia: American Writers and Artists in Italy, 1760-1915* (London: J. M. Dent, 1959); Paul R. Baker, *The Fortunate Pilgrims: Americans in Italy, 1800-1860* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964); C. P. Brand, *Italy and the English Romantics*; Brian Moloney, *Florence and England: Essays on Cultural Relations in the Second Half of the Eighteenth Century* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1969); and, more recently, Kenneth Churchill, *Italy and English Literature, 1764-1930* (London: Macmillan, 1980); J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, and M. Pfister, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*.

Given this outstanding artistic, literary and critical tradition, it is unsurprising that Italians themselves should have devoted attention to the history of travel to Italy. The recent growth in both popular and critical attention is, however, particularly interesting, and while it may reveal some of the ideological and historical roles with which travel and its texts are invested in contemporary Italian culture, it may also help to further explain the relative invisibility of travel writing produced by Italians themselves.

As already noted, there are close links between the growing attention devoted by Italians to travellers to the peninsula and the construction of a national (or local) heritage. Increasing competition from other Mediterranean countries as well as exotic locations has recently forced Italy to re-think its marketing strategy in an effort to attract larger numbers of affluent tourists, prepared to spend substantial amounts of money for the pleasure of visiting 'città d'arte' such as Florence or Venice, or relaxing in the exclusive villas of 'Chiantishire'.¹¹⁰ This concentration on 'quality' tourism may help to explain the revival of the Grand Tour tradition, with its images of learned gentlemen and romantic ladies gently strolling through the streets of Italian cities. But tourism is only one of the factors affecting the perception of travel and travel writing, and does not explain, on its own, the preference for foreign over Italian texts.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ See P. Baglioni, 'Flussi turistici in Italia e in Toscana'. The history of travel and the goals of the tourist industry were explicitly connected by the organizers of the symposium *Viaggio e viaggiatori nell'età del turismo; Per una riqualificazione dell'offerta turistica nelle città d'arte*, Florence, 13-15 November 1997. For an example of the widespread fame reached by this kind of tourism and the ambiguous status it holds in the eyes of the local population see Maurizio Crosetti, 'Benvenuti nel Langa-shire, nuovo paradiso degli stranieri', *la Repubblica*, 27 April 1998, p. 6.

¹¹¹ In fact, given that in recent years income from foreign tourism has tended to decrease nation-wide while the amount spent by Italians travelling abroad has increased dramatically, the tourist industry also needs to encourage internal travel (see G. Bianchi, 'L'Italia nella specializzazione turistica internazionale', pp. 33-65). Yet this need has not so far stimulated a re-discovery of Italian travel writing about Italy in any way comparable to the renewed attention devoted to foreign authors. Conversely, the increase in Italian tourism to foreign lands is certainly one of the reasons for the growing popularity of travel writing as a genre among the general public, yet, as we have seen, this has so far resulted in the publication of numerous translations of works by foreign authors, rather than a substantial re-evaluation of Italian writers.

The predominance of a traditional vision of Italy as the goal of travel and the object of travel accounts has further connections with the invisibility of Italian travel writing. The attention to Italy as the object of travel and the presence of well established (and studied) textual traditions of travels to Italy in the literatures of Britain, France, Germany and other European countries (as well as the United States) has favoured the development of a strong interest in travel writing among Italian scholars of foreign cultures. This, in turn, has reinforced the widespread perception of the genre as a predominantly foreign affair. The trend is so established that even recent books devoted to travel writing by Italian scholars of disciplines as different as geography, women studies, post-colonial studies, and history of art are either exclusively or predominantly concerned with foreign (i.e. non Italian) travellers.¹¹²

(ii.ii) The Myth of the Past

A further consequence of the predominance of the Grand Tour and its literature as a privileged model of travel writing is to be found in the preference for past over present accounts of Italy demonstrated by most contemporary Italian studies of travel. The travel accounts linked to the Grand Tour tradition are based on a combination of biographical experience and acquired knowledge; they present themselves as strictly non fictional, but often rely on previous authority not only for specific erudite data but also for actual

¹¹² See for instance *Geografie Private: I resoconti di viaggio come lettura del territorio*, ed. by Elisa Bianchi, Biblioteca del viaggio in Italia (Geneva: Slatkine, 1985); *Cultura del viaggio: Ricostruzione storico-geografica del territorio*, ed. by Giorgio Botta (Milan: Unicopli, 1989); *Viaggi di donne*, ed. by Andreina De Clementi and Maria Stella (Naples: Liguori, 1995); Rosanna Masiola Rosini, *Pianeti Proibiti: Descrizione traduzione intertesti. La semiosi dell'Impero e delle colonie dal Vecchio al Nuovo Mondo, e viceversa* (Perugia: Guerra, 1997); and the already mentioned F. Zeri, *La percezione visiva dell'Italia e degli italiani*, and C. De Seta, ed., *Storia d'Italia. Annali 5: Il paesaggio*.

descriptions, so that it is possible to say that travellers often see only what they have been prepared to see,¹¹³ and this often results in a preference for the past over the present, a tendency to read the contemporary through the eyes of previous centuries.¹¹⁴ Together with the reliance on authority, a second type of anachronistic eye insinuates itself in the travel writing of this period: antiquarianism was one of the dominant interests of travellers to Italy at the apex of the Grand Tour, and this predilection is evident in their narratives.¹¹⁵

This archaeology of Italy (the predominance of the myth of the past over its contemporary images) had relevant consequences for the history of the representation of Italy. Within the discourse of travel writing, it fostered the spread of negative stereotypes about the modern country and its inhabitants. Once established these set images were often simply repeated on the basis of authority and passed on, virtually unchanged, over the centuries.¹¹⁶ According to Venturi, the myth of classical Italy ‘si è cristallizzato finalmente

¹¹³ Detailed descriptions of the conventions of travel writing in the period in question can be found in Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, De Seta, ‘L'Italia nello specchio del Grand Tour’.

¹¹⁴ See J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, especially pp. 113-21; according to Pemble, travellers found the Italy they had invented (p. 113). For an extensive account of the way in which the past and present images of Italy were presented by European writers and travellers (from Mabillon to Burnet, to Montesquieu, to Gibbon, to Goethe...) between the seventeenth and the nineteenth century see F. Venturi, ‘L'Italia fuori d'Italia’. On the way in which established traditions influenced the visual representation of Italy see Loredana Polezzi, ‘Thomas Jones: Autobiografia e viaggio nelle memorie di un paesaggista gallese in Italia’, *Intersezioni*, 18.1 (April 1998), 67-84.

¹¹⁵ In his study of the image of Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the historian Franco Venturi repeatedly notes this antiquarian tendency: Addison, for instance, travelled ‘in quel gran museo che era l'Italia, museo non soltanto di storia, d'arte e di scienze naturali, ma delle più curiose forme politiche’ (‘L'Italia fuori d'Italia’, p. 1013); and that same ‘Italia-museo (e museo non poco impolverato) vide e minutamente descrisse [...] il francese Charles De Brosses’ (p. 1030). See also Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, pp. 30-38.

¹¹⁶ Attilio Brilli's remarks on the pages of ‘hypochondriac travellers’ such as Smollett and Sharp point out the power of such stereotypical representations: ‘Se da un lato l'accidia di Sharp e di Smollett non fa che esprimere in maniera tendenziosa il sempre latente disprezzo britannico per una civiltà a loro avviso degenerata dalla probità e dalla grandezza romana nella più cupa immoralità ed abiezione politica e di costume; dall'altro perpetua in forme sempre più rigide quelle presentazioni stereotipate in cui i pedestri manuali di viaggio presumono di sintetizzare la natura di un paese e di un popolo. Uno sguardo divagatorio al modo in cui per secoli gli inglesi hanno guardato agli italiani, da quando ritenevano (in verità, non a sproposito) che i pericoli principali fossero rappresentati “dal caldo, dal Sant'Uffizio e dai briganti”, a quando Ruskin deplora l'incuria con cui “questi musci di scimmia” tengono i loro monumenti, mette in luce una protratta tendenza anglosassone a considerare i vari stati e le città della penisola, prima, e quindi il territorio

in Winckelmann in una visione che impedisce completamente di guardare alle città e alle campagne di allora'.¹¹⁷ This crystallization of the gaze can also be found in the figurative arts, and especially in landscape painting, with its attention to monuments and ruins, its representation of Italy as an archaeological site in which classical architecture and sublime scenery combined to give perfect (and imaginary) effects. Federico Zeri (p. 24) has noted the early origins of these trends (which he dates at least to the sixteenth century) and their culmination in the visual arts of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century:

Fuori d'Italia si moltiplicano le variazioni sul "bel paese", il luogo dagli ampi orizzonti e dai cieli limpidi, vera e propria Arcadia, i cui abitanti vivono in una rinnovata età dell'oro, tra greggi, amori, tramonti e splendide rovine. Vario di qualità artistica, spesso assai alta, questo cliché finisce con il cristallizzarsi nello stereotipo: [...] manca qualsiasi accenno alle reali condizioni della penisola e dei suoi abitanti, questi ridotti a perenni comparse di un teatro dove scena tragica, scena comica e scena satirica tendono a mescolarsi e a sovrapporsi l'una sull'altra. È che l'Italia, assente dal rapporto internazionale se non come merce di scambio, strangolata culturalmente, congelata socialmente (salvo la rivolta improvvisamente accesa, divampata e spenta), l'Italia sta ora diventando il paese turistico per eccellenza; i suoi abitanti, gli *indigeni*, vengono osservati dagli europei con il medesimo, indifferente distacco per la loro condizione umana con cui i viaggiatori ottocenteschi si volgeranno ai cinesi dell'Impero manciú. (p. 39)

nazionale, come un giardino di delizie, uno sterminato museo, un impareggiabile campionario antropologico e folkloristico, un sanatorio per schifiliosi nordici malati di petto, un territorio di caccia a disposizione di più evolute culture o supposte tali' (*Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, p. 37). It is also significant that Brilli should mention Addison as the initiator of both the antiquarian tradition and of the 'atteggiamento sprezzante verso gli italiani che, con alterne vicende, sarebbe durato quanto la voga del Grand Tour, per riemergere, dopo le simpatie di pochi romantici, nell'acrimonia di Ruskin e nell'indifferenza di James' (pp. 31-32). The similarity with the processes noted by Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1991; 1st edn London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978) and Rana Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions: Europe's Myths of Orient*, 2nd rev. edn (London: Pandora, 1994) in the case of 'Orientals' is striking. There too a combination of antagonistic 'othering' and repetitive use of past authorities is at the heart of the creation and reproduction of negative stereotypes. On the similarities between stereotypes concerning 'Oriental' and 'Mediterranean' people see also Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 237-9 and p. 264.

¹¹⁷ In *La percezione visiva dell'Italia e degli italiani* (p. 24), Zeri remarks: 'Si diffonde così, al di qua e al di là delle Alpi, l'immagine di un'Italia irreale, di aspetto prevalentemente archeologico, una sorta di protoarcadia antichizzante, che si spalanca nei fondi di molti ritratti, sulle pareti di alcune tra le più sontuose ville; ed è una moda che si innesta per vari percorsi su diversi ceppi architettonici e culturali, non ultimo il classicismo di Andrea Palladio.'

Even the 'italomania' which was widespread in London at the beginning of the nineteenth century was based on the image of a dead Italy, which could only 'pride herself on her poets winning the admiration of the world'.¹¹⁸ Venturi points out that:

la radice prima della vigorosa pianta dell'Italia britannica ottocentesca è tutta letteraria ed artistica, e affonda nella civiltà, non nella realtà politica italiana, e neppure nella sua storia, ma nell'amore e nel rimpianto di un passato inesorabilmente interrotto. [...] L'Italia era bella cioè proprio perché in rovina. Attirava proprio perché era una civiltà immobile, morta. Atteggiamento romantico che prese in quegli anni mille diverse forme, proliferò in innumeri pagine.¹¹⁹

In his study of Victorian and Edwardian travellers to the Mediterranean, John Pemble has documented the development of these trends throughout the nineteenth century, noting that British travellers 'had little interest in the idea of close contact with Mediterranean people'. Travel books, in particular:

were generally more concerned to expound what the Mediterranean had been than to discover what it was. [...] Victorian writing on the Mediterranean was dominated by the assumption that the modern South was in some crucial sense not authentic. Always looking back, the Victorians related and compared what they saw with what they had read, and they judged the present to be a distortion or a remnant of the real South of Classical or medieval times.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Quarterly Review*, April 1818, p. 157 (quoted in Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', p. 1194).

¹¹⁹ Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', pp. 1195-96. Both Brilli and Venturi notice that, with few exceptions, the romantic travellers did not substantially change the dominant attitude to contemporary Italy, and even the Italophiles Byron and Shelley could not reconcile the two faces of the image of Italy which had been constructed over the centuries; see Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', pp. 1198-1202; Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, pp. 50-53; on Byron, Shelley and their ambiguous attitude to Italy see also Herbert Barrows, 'Convention and Novelty in the Romantic Generation's Experience of Italy', in *Literature as a Mode of Travel: Five Essays and a Postscript*, ed. by Warner G. Rice (New York: The New York Public Library, 1963), pp. 69-84. The even less benevolent Lamartine called Italy 'terre du passé' and excluded any hope of resurrection: 'Ce nom d'Italie est une abstraction: morcelée en petits états, divisée d'intérêts et de mœurs, il n'y a plus d'Italie que sur les anciennes cartes. Mais il existe encore sur ce sol inépuisable sept ou huit peuples propres à tout, excepté à former une seule nation, qui, humiliés, opprimés par l'Autriche, tournent les regards vers la France en attendant, si non un libérateur, au moins une domination plus tolérable; changer souvent de maîtres est la consolation des peuples asservis' (quoted in Gemma Cenzatti, *Alfonso de Lamartine e l'Italia* (Livorno: Raffaello Giusti, 1903), p. 84).

¹²⁰ J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 267.

According to Susan Stewart, similar views were also shared by Americans travelling to Europe in the nineteenth century: for them 'Italy represented what might be called a contaminated site of representations ranging from classicism to Catholicism to revolution'; and the Old World was 'a land of pictures, an archaeological site with so many shifting and fusing layers of meaning that all is art rather than rule, we have dreamed this dream before. [...] For the most part, the picture is Italy and not a celebration of particular works or paintings'. Furthermore, this Italy-as-a-picture 'is always suspect, framed by another picture' and 'this travel writing is thus relentlessly intertextual'. The fundamental inspiration of such attitudes and representational practices was, once again, based on a myth of the past: 'the Aestheticization of Italy — its language a music, its people a portrait, its landscapes a painting — was part of a very generalized tracing of an aesthetic genealogy from the classical world.'¹²¹

The constant reminder of 'past glories', however, also allowed the positive attributes of (past) Italians and Italian culture not to be forgotten, building the premises for the belief in — and approval of — a possible Italian resurrection. Representations which had been made current (and even ossified) by travellers resurfaced in the nineteenth century in influential arguments in favour of the unification and independence of Italy. Thus it is thanks to the construction of its history as a cycle of greatness and decay, that Italy acquired the potential (and the right) to a national future in the eyes of many Northern European supporters of its independence.¹²² This is the perspective espoused by Matthew Arnold in his pamphlet 'England and the Italian Question', written in 1859. Setting out to prove the

¹²¹ S. Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, pp. 179, 181-182, and p. 192 respectively.

¹²² See for instance J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 10 and pp. 137-38.

right of Italy to national unity and independence, Arnold first argues that the process of national unification had in fact started in Italy during the twelfth century and ‘went on for nearly two centuries, and these centuries are the greatest in Italian history’.¹²³ The role of the past becomes even more emphatic when Arnold comes to discuss the legitimacy of Italian claims to nationality:

No other country, not even the great powers such as Russia, Austria, and Prussia, could cry with such just humiliation and despair in undergoing a foreign rule, “*Unde lapsus!*” What is the past of these three nations, what their elements for a national pride to feed upon, what their history, art, or literature, compared with those of Italy? — of a people, which, besides having been the most brilliant in Europe in the middle ages and at the Revival of Letters, has in addition, to swell its consciousness of its gifts and grandeur, all the glories of the Roman Empire. (p. 72)

It was the moral and historical duty of the Englishman, ‘not only proud of his country, but sincerely convinced of the utility of her moral influence for the nations abroad’ (p. 92), to ‘desire the establishment of a great and free Italy’ (p. 94). Thus England, the natural heir of the great classical tradition, also came to perceive itself as Italy’s champion.¹²⁴

The myth of the past, which dominated images of Italy produced by travellers from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, thus extended beyond the boundaries of travel writing and the visual arts, and informed other forms of representation and other discourses,

¹²³ M. Arnold, ‘England and the Italian Question’, now in M. Arnold, *On the Classical Tradition*, ed. by R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 65-96. According to Arnold, the process of national development was then violently stopped by foreign invasions of Italy, and ‘no country in the world, at such a stage in its formation, could have maintained its independent course of growth under such shocks’ (p. 69).

¹²⁴ References to both of these roles are to be found in the pamphlet; it is also noticeable that ‘On translating Homer’ (now in *On the Classical Tradition*, pp. 97-216), one of the key documents of nineteenth-century British classicism, was written by Arnold shortly after his defence of Italy. The one expressed by Arnold was, of course, not the only position on the Italian question available to the English public, yet it certainly was the culmination of an influential line of thought. For a contextualization of Arnold’s pamphlet and a discussion of alternative positions at the time see Venturi, ‘L’Italia fuori d’Italia’, pp. 1439-41. On the nineteenth-century debate on the principle of nationality and its origins see for instance Martin Thom, ‘Tribes within Nations’, in *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi K. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 23-43.

including those of politics and international relations. Yet it never lost its ambivalent force, its power to sustain both admiring and dismissive judgements, and its tendency to hide the full reality of Italy (and its history) from the traveller's gaze.

This same antiquarian tendency, with all its ambiguities, is still to be found today in Italian studies of foreign travel to the peninsula, which tend to privilege narratives both produced in and devoted to the past over contemporary accounts of the country. The main goal of such studies seems to be (whether consciously or not) the production of a romanticized narrative of the discovery or re-discovery of Italy and of its pre-eminent role in the progress of European 'civilization' and 'high culture'.¹²⁵ Thus travel writing about Italy can still function as the source and repository of forms of knowledge about the country which preceded its national formation and can be exploited in order to construct an international stature for Italy, to 'invent a tradition' in keeping with the ambitions of the modern nation: if the country is still, to an extent, perceived as a 'newcomer' among the 'old' European nations, it can at least look back to a unitary history,¹²⁶ or claim to have inspired national élites throughout Europe for centuries, and to have a recognized role among them in matters of taste, art, culture and refinement. Contemporary travel writing about Italy (whether written by foreigners or by Italians) enjoys a more ambiguous status. It is perceived as more directly linked with today's mass tourism (with its negative connotations) and can be more easily discarded for its lack of prestige and its popular

¹²⁵ Further proof of this is to be found in the fact that studies by foreign scholars which conform to this approach to travel writing (and to travel in Italy in particular) are also translated into Italian, as in the case of the already mentioned volumes by J. Pemble and P. Fussell, or Eric Leed's *The Mind of the Traveler: From Gilgamesh to Global Tourism* (New York: Basic Book, 1991; Italian edn *La mente del viaggiatore: Dall'Odissea al turismo globale*, trans. by Erica Joy Mannucci (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992)), and Antoni Maczak's *Zycie codzienne w podrózach po Europie w XVI i XVII wieku* (Warsaw: Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1978; Italian edn *Viaggi e viaggiatori nell'Europa moderna*, trans. by Renzo Panzone and Andrzej Litwornia (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1992)), both of which give ample space to travel in Italy.

¹²⁶ On the issue of the unitary nature of Italian history before and after unification and on the debates surrounding it see Carlo Dionisotti, *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana* (Turin: Einaudi, 1967).

(rather than highbrow) appeal. Deprived of their testimonial and antiquarian functions, strictly contemporary volumes about Italy cannot compete with their predecessors in capturing the attention of Italian critics and audiences.

(ii.iii) 'Heterostereotypes' and 'Autostereotypes'

So far significantly little attention has been devoted by Italian scholars of travel to Italy to what could be called the 'reciprocity' of cultures: to the way in which contacts between different groups are formative at both ends of the connection; the way in which travellers traversing Italy, its history and its culture have contributed, directly or indirectly, to mould its identity; or the way in which the images they produced for British or German consumption effectively came to function as a mirror, positive or negative, for Italy and Italians.¹²⁷ Externally produced images of Italy, have in fact influenced internal representations of the country and people, that is images of Italy produced within the boundaries of the Italian culture and of the Italian nation. Travel writing forms a conspicuous part of the wealth of texts written about Italy, and it can constitute a privileged instrument in the effort to gain an insight into the construction of an Italian identity in its double edged structure: the formation of stereotypes and codified images which are taken to represent the people and country as seen by others; and the invention of binding traditions

¹²⁷ The 'negative mirror' is an image evoked in Italo Calvino, *Le città invisibili* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972): 'L'altrove è uno specchio in negativo. Il viaggiatore riconosce il poco che è suo, scoprendo il molto che non ha avuto e non avrà.' (p. 35). Calvino's text is analysed in Chapter 6 of the present study. For a discussion of the mirror as a figure of travel writing see François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. by Janet Lloyd (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988). On Italy 'in the mirror' of travel writing see the already mentioned essay by De Seta, 'L'Italia nello specchio del Grand Tour'.

and narrations within the nation itself.¹²⁸ The travel account in fact, whether in the guise of a personal diary, a formal report, or a more literary travelogue, has the ability to mediate the Other to its audience — whether this is constituted by a restricted circle of friends, the recognized political authority, or a modern mass public.¹²⁹ In *Civilisation and Its Discontents* Freud noted that the mechanisms of national (or, in general, group) identity formation have much in common with those at play in the case of the individual subject.¹³⁰ The establishment of boundaries, and the recognition of the Otherness of those located outside them, are specifically described by Freud in his discussion of the relationship between ‘civilization’ and what he terms ‘the narcissism of minor differences’:

It is clearly not easy for men to give up this inclination to aggression. They do not feel comfortable without it. The advantage which a comparatively small cultural group offers of allowing this instinct an outlet in the form of hostility against intruders is not to be despised. It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness.¹³¹

The separation of the traveller from his or her home at the beginning of the journey, is followed by a recognition of Otherness as well as Sameness, as the traveller leaves the original community but takes along in his or her journey the language and culture of the

¹²⁸ On this subject see Venturi, ‘L’Italia fuori d’Italia’, and John Dickie, ‘*La macchina da scrivere*: The Victor Emmanuel Monument in Rome and Italian Nationalism’, *The Italianist*, 14 (1994), 261-85; Dickie’s article also offers extensive additional bibliography.

¹²⁹ There are similarities between this function of travel writing and the role of translation and other types of rewriting in the shaping of collective identities. See Chapter 3 for a detailed analysis of these parallels.

¹³⁰ Freud states his ‘view that the development of civilization is a special process, comparable to the normal maturation of the individual’, and points at sublimation of individual instincts as ‘an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development’; S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), now in *Civilization, Society and Religion* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1985), pp. 245-340 (pp. 286-87); for a discussion of the relevance of Freud’s thought in contemporary theories of identity see: Homi Bhabha, ‘DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation’, in *Nation and Narration*, pp. 291-322.

¹³¹ *Civilization and Its Discontents*, pp. 304-5.

group.¹³² Whether the route taken will be contained by the frontiers of one's elective group (as in Medieval pilgrimages to the centre of Christianity), or whether (as in the case of the Grand Tour) the journey will cross the boundaries of an internal space and lead towards other territories, nations and cultures, travel can be described as one of the key acts through which individuals as well as groups come to define those boundaries which are essential to the constitution and safeguard of group identity.

Such a process does not leave the Other, the object of the narration, intact: the political and social consequences of travel as a practice — and of its narration as a legitimization of that practice — are hard to forget when we consider that for centuries travel and travel writing have been virtually synonymous with exploration, conquest and empire-building. More subtly, the discourse of travel, as imposed on its objects, affects their own self-definition and identification. As noted by Mary Louise Pratt with respect to South American communities, the narratives produced by travel writers had a profound effect on the 'locals' and their self-representation, until they managed to produce 'transcultured' models which were in themselves original and could even be exported back to the European scenarios from which they were originally derived.¹³³

If processes such as the ones described by Pratt with regard to South America (or those analysed by Edward Said and Tejaswini Niranjana in their accounts of Orientalism

¹³² See Barry Curtis and Claire Pajackowska, "'Getting There": Travel, Time and Narrative', in *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*, ed. by George Robertson and others (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 199-215 (p. 204); in the same volume see also Madan Sarup, 'Home and identity', pp. 93-104.

¹³³ M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, in particular Chapter 8, 'Reinventing América/Reinventing Europe: Creole self-fashioning' (pp. 172-97). Pratt talks about self-invention as well as self-fashioning. She also discusses the important role played by travel writing and its discourse (assigning a special place to Alexander von Humboldt's works) in the process of cultural *mestizaje* taking place in what she terms 'the contact zone': 'The English and French travelers were read in Spanish America; one finds them quoted here and there, and journalists like Bello translated selections from their writings. And yet, faced with the challenges of decolonizing their cultures, [...], they turned with remarkable consistency to the utopian Americanist aesthetic codified by Humboldt, who had found it, in part, in them.' (p.187).

and colonization)¹³⁴ have become increasingly visible in the era of post-colonialism and post-imperialism, it is somewhat more difficult to trace the way in which a similar logic can be applied to a European context, as in the case of Italy and its description in British, French, or German travel literature. Discussing recent post-colonial studies of translation (another textual practice which, like travel writing, produces representations of other cultures), Michael Cronin has argued the need for a more fragmented and less essentialist view of 'European' culture, capable of incorporating internal divisions among the central and the marginal, the dominant and the minoritarian.¹³⁵ Taking a similar perspective, Manfred Pfister has convincingly argued that Italy occupies a complex and ambiguous position with respect to Northern European nations and what he calls the phenomenon of 'intra-European "Meridionism"':¹³⁶ while figuring as part of Europe, and even, for centuries, being recognized as one of its main cultural matrixes, Italy also represents a border, a periphery of the modern metropolis, especially after the voyages of discovery and the incipient industrial and political revolutions deprived the Mediterranean of its centrality and transformed Italy from a 'social and political laboratory' into a 'social and political museum'.¹³⁷ Italy was allocated such an ambivalent role through a process of construction based on the production of what Pfister calls 'autostereotypes' and 'heterostereotypes', that is mirroring images of the Self and of the Other.¹³⁸ Thus 'the constructions of Italy that

¹³⁴ See E. Said, *Orientalism*; and Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1992).

¹³⁵ M. Cronin, 'Altered States: Translation and Minority Languages', *TTR*, 8.1 (1995), 85-103 (p. 85).

¹³⁶ M. Pfister, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 3.

¹³⁷ The formulas are adapted from Vittor Ivo Comparato, 'Viaggiatori inglesi in Italia tra Sei e Settecento: La formazione di un modello interpretativo', in *Cultura del viaggio*, ed. by G. Botta, pp. 31-58.

¹³⁸ Pfister (*The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 4) illustrates the two related concepts in the following words: 'Each heterostereotype has as its reverse an autostereotype, and it is the autostereotype that has functional priority. A culture defines itself by defining other cultures; the self defines itself by defining the other. The need for cultural or national identity always expresses and realizes itself in the ascriptions of difference and otherness to the neighbouring cultures and nations.' On the same subject see also Manfred Pfister, 'Editorial', *Journal*

inform the Italian experience of British travellers and its representations' can be analysed as 'an interconnected set of oppositions setting up Italy against Britain'.¹³⁹ This in turn means that from its ambiguous, semi-peripheral position Italy can definitely partake of the two-way process through which, according to scholars of travel such as Mary Louise Pratt, the periphery, while influenced by the centre, can still exercise influence on the metropolis itself, 'beginning perhaps with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its others continually to itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that imperative'.¹⁴⁰

Yet the mirroring process set in motion by travel and the representations it produces does not stop here. Drawing on the example of Ireland and its Celtic languages, Cronin has noted the negative effects of antiquarian perspectives,¹⁴¹ remarking that the dominance of the past favours the production of stereotypical representations or 'imagotypes' which can be internalized by those same people they are supposed to represent, so much that those same people may come to believe 'that an essential part of their being is constituted by these imagotypes' (pp. 96-99). Through similar mechanisms images of Italy produced by travellers for foreign consumption could then influence the country's own self-images.

Over at least three centuries travel writing spread throughout Europe and its already formed nation-states an ambiguous image of Italy: on the one hand it evoked a glorious — and unified — past, represented, at different points, by the Roman Empire, the unity of pre-reformation Christianity under the Church of Rome, or the cultural and artistic peak of the

for the Study of British Cultures, 4.1-2 (1997), 5-9. Homi Bhabha, on the other hand, speaks of stereotype as what is already there and yet must be anxiously repeated, emphasizing the role of tradition in the formation of stereotypical images; see H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 66.

¹³⁹ Pfister, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p.6.

¹⁴¹ 'Altered States', p. 96.

Renaissance; on the other, it constantly and repeatedly gave a portrait of present decadence which functioned both as a sort of spiritual *memento* and as an instrument of self-glorification for Britain, as well as other Northern European nations, which could then erect themselves as modern inheritors of Italy's (or, by extension, Rome's) lost power and splendour in a continuation of the ancient doctrine of the *translatio studii et imperii* — the gradual movement of power and knowledge from the East to the West.¹⁴²

This historical and cultural ambivalence is represented as inherent in Italy's geographic position: as a Mediterranean country it could easily be classified as liminal,¹⁴³ in itself a boundary between Occident and Orient, between modern civilization and ancestral exoticism.¹⁴⁴ And, depending on the occasion and the intention, one element could become dominant over the other.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² John Pemble (*The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 228) talks of visions of the South 'strewn with carcasses of dead empires'. By the nineteenth century, historians and political theorists were debating the merits of past Northern and Southern European cultures and their respective roles as 'ancestors' of the modern nation states and their 'civilization'; on the subject see Venturi, 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia', and Thom, 'Tribes within Nations'. Benedict Anderson, in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London and New York: Verso, 1991) discusses the use of images of decadence to support colonialist ideology (p. 181). On *translatio studii et imperii* and its modern and contemporary significance see Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 104-41; Barbara Godard, 'Writing Between Cultures', *TTR*, 10.1 (1997), 53-99 (pp. 61-64), and Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire: Postcolonial Theories Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1997), pp. 52-55.

¹⁴³ On the concept of liminality see Victor Turner, *Drama, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974). Homi Bhabha has recently discussed the notion of liminality in relation to forms of travel such as migration, and to translation; see *The Location of Culture*, pp. 224-25.

¹⁴⁴ Jacques Le Goff, for instance, maintains that one of the characteristics of Medieval Italy 'fu proprio di essere alla cerniera di tre mondi: il cristiano latino, il cristiano greco e il musulmano. La frontiera tra questi tre mondi è passata a lungo attraverso l'Italia'; in 'L'Italia fuori d'Italia: L'Italia nello specchio del Medioevo', in *Storia d'Italia*, II, pp. 1933-2088 (p. 2086). This frontier position is still visible in the way in which, today, Italy and the Orient are easily coupled in stylized descriptions of the practices of romantic travel, as in the following quotation from Michel Butor ('Travel and Writing', in *Temperamental Journeys*, ed. by M. Kowalewski, pp. 53-70 (p. 53)): 'All our writers set out on the road. They made their journey to Italy or to the Orient, published their accounts of it, and furnished us, in consequence, with an inestimable collection of documents and reflections upon this question.'

¹⁴⁵ Frequent pictorial and literary descriptions of Venice, for instance, centre on the mixture of races and the oriental quality of its squares and markets, making this city an especially apt and dense example of a trait which was nevertheless attributable to Italy in general; on this subject see F. Zeri, *La percezione visiva dell'Italia e degli italiani*, pp. 15-16.

The predominance of such liminal images is not without material consequences for Italy's own self-representations. Long before the Risorgimento achieved a political unification which made the social disparities across the length of the peninsula all the more evident, the divide between North and South had been instituted and insisted upon as a stereotype of the narration of Italy by travellers such as the majority of the Grand Tourists (who declined to include in their Italian itineraries areas South of Rome or, at most, Naples).¹⁴⁶ The rhetoric of North and South, which has so powerfully shaped the political history of unified Italy, could find ready-made and roughly but cogently formulated fodder in the accounts of travellers spanning entire centuries;¹⁴⁷ and the effect of such stereotyping on the internal dynamics of the newly formed state merits more attention than it has so far received.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ On this subject see for instance A. Mozzillo, *La frontiera del Grand Tour*. John Pemble (*The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 228) also stresses the North/South divide and its ambivalences: on the one hand Mediterranean countries as a whole belonged to the South and 'history predisposed the British to be hostile, because history showed the South to be in decline'; on the other, it was possible to make complex distinctions even within Italy, as in the case of Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, who 'took pains to point out that the leaders of the Risorgimento were the Northern Italians of Piedmont — "one of those vigorous races which has not been enfeebled by the enervating influence of Southern Italy, and seems to have been nerved and braced to deeds of heroic valour by the bleak winds which blow upon it from the Alps".'

¹⁴⁷ These same geographical and cultural stereotypes are still to be found in contemporary descriptions of Italy, such as the following, taken from the opening page of Ros Belford, Martin Dunford and Celia Woolfrey, *Italy: The Rough Guide*, 2nd edition (London: Rough Guides, 1993): 'Of European countries, Italy is perhaps the hardest to classify. It is a modern, industrialized nation, with companies like *Fiat* and *Olivetti* market-leaders in their field. It is the harbinger of style, its designers leading the way with each season's fashions. But it is also, to an equal degree, a Mediterranean country, with all that that implies. Agricultural land covers much of the country, a lot of it, especially in the South, still owned under almost feudal conditions. In the towns and villages all over the country, life stops during the middle of the day for a siesta, and is strongly family-orientated, with an emphasis on the traditions and rituals of the Catholic church — which, notwithstanding a growing scepticism among the country's youth, still dominates people's lives here to an immediately obvious degree' (p. vi).

¹⁴⁸ Venturi ('L'Italia fuori d'Italia') is one of the few to focus on such dynamics. He notices a very early connection between travel and images of Italy produced within the peninsula when he draws the connection between the *Iter Italicum* of Jean Mabillon and the development of modern Italian historiography: 'Tutta la nuova storiografia che da Muratori prende nome, da Jean Mabillon, direttamente o indirettamente, doveva trarre, nei decenni seguenti, una sua essenziale ispirazione. La riscoperta del Medioevo italiano, del come fosse nata la stessa nazione italiana, fu resa possibile e stimolata non solo dai nuovi strumenti critici che i maurini avevano approntato per tutti i dotti d'Europa, ma dal giudizio, misurato e staccato e pur così efficace che ognuno poté trovare nelle pagine dell'*Iter Italicum* di Mabillon' (p. 990).

(iii) Italian Literary Criticism and Italian Travel Writing

The overall impression one is left with after a review of the literature devoted to travel writing about Italy is that everyone, for centuries, has been travelling to the ‘Belpaese’ — and writing about it — while Italians have been content to play the role of hosts (in both senses of the word: the commercial and the gentlemanly one). Yet the review of past and present Italian travel writing carried out in the first part of this chapter revealed a wealth of under-studied texts. Both the survey of editorial policies and of critical trends undertaken so far point to the presence of a significant body of contemporary Italian travel writing. What is really absent, however, is a critical tradition which looks at travel writing as a genre as well as its contacts with other types of narrative, at its formal and stylistic constraints as well as the circumstances of its production and reception, at its textuality as well as its *fortuna*, and at its broad cultural functions rather than its documentary ones.

This diagnosis has recently been confirmed by Italian as well as foreign critics.

Theodore Cachey has pointed out the paradox in comparative terms:

The Italian is arguably the most “well traveled” of the Western European literary traditions. Italian literature, since Marco Polo and Dante, has always displayed the greatest mobility across time and space in both geographical and literary terms. Yet, the “History of Italian Literature” does not include a chapter on the literature of travel. While the national literary traditions of England, France, and Spain have long recognized the powerfully fecund relationship between travel and the formal and ideological development of their respective histories, the Italian literary canon and consequently its historiography have remained largely impervious to Italy’s splendid legacy of travel literature.¹⁴⁹

149 T. J. Cachey, ‘An Italian Literary History of Travel’, *Annali d’italianistica*, 14 (1996), 53-63 (p. 55) (special issue on *L’odeporica/Hodoeporics: On Travel Literature*, ed. by Luigi Monga).

Reviewing a book by the same Cachey (*Le Isole Fortunate: Appunti di storia letteraria italiana*),¹⁵⁰ Luciano Formisano confirms the lack of attention which traditionally accompanies Italian travel writing, and even goes on to observe:

Era probabilmente destinato che un libro di questo tipo fosse scritto da un italianista d'oltre Oceano: per il quale la problematica connessa allo "sguardo antropologico" è poco meno che centrale, avviando una riflessione sul significato della tradizione letteraria europea, che la distanza oceanica indubbiamente favorisce.¹⁵¹

Next to the problem of perspective, Formisano points out some of the main issues which have influenced the attitude of Italian literary criticism towards travel writing. The first is the predominance of:

quell' "ideale di disinteressata e disincarnata letterarietà" che sembra caratterizzare da sempre la nostra letteratura: fenomeno niente affatto metafisico ma storicamente determinato se è vero che in Italia lo stesso ideale impronta il sistema dei generi letterari fra Quattrocento e Cinquecento, garantendone il primato europeo, mentre al paese è mancata quella partecipazione collettiva alle grandi scoperte che sola poteva autorizzare l'allargamento del canone. (p. 109)

It is precisely the dominance of this restrictive notion of 'disembodied literariness' (first pointed out by Cardona, whom Formisano is quoting)¹⁵² that also determines the kind of attention travel writing does (if at all) receive in Italy:

l'inversione di tendenza degli ultimi anni ha visto in prima linea linguisti, storici della lingua, romanisti: studiosi per i quali l'apertura al dato etnografico, alla comunicazione meno formalizzata, alla comparatistica è un elemento irrinunciabile del proprio mestiere

¹⁵⁰ Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1995.

¹⁵¹ L. Formisano, 'Letteratura di viaggio e letteratura italiana', *Intersezioni*, 17.1 (1997), 109-15 (p. 115).

¹⁵² See Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, 'I viaggi e le scoperte', in *Letteratura italiana: Le questioni*, ed. by Alberto Asor Rosa (Turin: Einaudi, 1986), pp. 687-716 (p. 687).

[...] Il rinnovato interesse per la storia delle esplorazioni e la rinascita degli studi di geografia umanistica hanno fatto il resto. (p. 109)

What Formisano is highlighting here is the contrast between 'literariness' and what he calls the 'sguardo antropologico' which animates foreign critics such as Cachey as well as Italian scholars whose interests are not confined to a (still predominant) narrow definition of literature. And it is significant that, among Italian literary critics, travel writing is always discussed as 'letteratura di viaggio' (as opposed to other possible labels, such as 'scrittura di viaggio').

The traditional concentration of critical attention on formal criteria and aesthetic ideals has produced either a tendency to discard travel writing as 'un-literary' ('un-writerly'), or a preference for metaphoric notions of travel as a trope, motif or archetype of the human experience and of its literary transfiguration.¹⁵³ Even Donatella Capodarca's anthology of critical approaches to travel, *I viaggi nella narrativa* (Modena: Mucchi, 1994) follows this trend. The volume opens with an outline of the relationship between the motif of travel and 'due generi che hanno caratterizzato la narrativa, dalle origini all'età contemporanea: il romanzesco (*romance*) e il realismo narrativo (*novel*)' (p. 7). Travel is immediately characterized as 'uno degli archetipi che organizzano e ordinano la molteplicità delle esperienze dell'io intorno a un grande asse semiologico (è ovvio che ogni viaggio narrativo evoca la nozione originaria della vita come viaggio)' (p. 7). And the theme of quest (from the *Odyssey* to the *Divine Comedy*, from Manzoni to nineteenth-

¹⁵³ The latter trend is very much alive in the current panorama of Italian criticism, as demonstrated by studies such as Piero Boitani's *L'ombra di Ulisse: Figure di un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), or Sergio Perosa's *L'isola la donna il ritratto: Quattro variazioni* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1996), two rhapsodic volumes in which the theme of travel is often sublimated into 'disincarnata letterarietà'. Even more 'rhapsodic' is Loredano Matteo Lorenzetti's *Viaggio nel viaggio: Metamorfosi della conoscenza* (Milan: Guerini, 1992), which alternates Freudian readings of the theme of travel with poems and passages of creative writing.

century symbolism, and then to Svevo, Pirandello and Joyce) is the central topic of Capodarca's introductory essay.¹⁵⁴ The preference for the topos of travel over travel narrative is also reflected in the selection of extracts which forms the rest of the volume: although this includes sections by De Seta on picturesque travel, and by Guagnini on eighteenth-century travel writing, the majority of the passages belongs either to the tradition of stylistic criticism, from Curtius, to Singleton to Gadda, or to the narratological and semiotic schools, with names such as Lotman, Bachtin, Segre, Corti and Eco.¹⁵⁵

There are, of course, exceptions to these general trends even within the limits of Italian literary historiography and criticism. A more eclectic approach characterizes the volume *La letteratura di viaggio: Storia e prospettive di un genere letterario*, edited by Maria Enrica D'Agostini.¹⁵⁶ The book contains interesting pages on contemporary Italian travel writing (such as an analysis of travel and semiotics in Italo Calvino, or a piece on travel and narrative strategies in Daniele Del Giudice), side by side with an article on medieval travel manuals, or a study of Kant's discursive strategies as 'travels on paper'.

¹⁵⁴ The contrast between the eternal idea and the historical experience of travel is set out by Capodarca, but only to be resolved, with the help of a host of authoritative references, in favour of the first: 'Ma il ruolo che l'esperienza del viaggio ha avuto nella cultura italiana ed europea agli inizi dell'età moderna, deve essere illustrato anche al di fuori delle opere di grande significato letterario, facendo riferimento agli scrittori che nelle loro relazioni di viaggio descrissero i luoghi e le genti del nuovo continente, e soprattutto alla mentalità con la quale vissero quella loro eccezionale esperienza. [...] Ha scritto Elias Canetti che "gli antichi resoconti di viaggio diventeranno famosi come le più grandi opere d'arte; perché sacra era la terra "sconosciuta" e non può più esserlo". Secondo Cardona, il viaggio ha sempre assunto valenze culturali assai più estese delle condizioni della sua realtà storica. In modo particolare, le storie della letteratura sono coerenti nell'indicare il valore archetipico e antropologico del viaggio. Come afferma C. Magris, ogni viaggio "è una sortita all'aperto e insieme un ritorno a casa, è il viaggio dello spirito che parte alla scoperta del mondo e dispiega, in questa lotta col molteplice e con l'ignoto, le proprie latenti possibilità sì da tornare, cresciuto e adulto, alla casa ritrovata"' (pp. 20-21).

¹⁵⁵ Maria Corti and Umberto Eco provide the last two extracts in the anthology (pp. 175-80 and pp. 181-83, respectively), both devoted to travel as a metaphor for the reader's experience of the text — an image which has been particularly popular in contemporary Italian criticism and confirms, at a different level, the tendency to interpret 'travel' as a motif rather than a constitutive element of narrative. The extracts are from M. Corti, *Il viaggio testuale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978) and U. Eco, *Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi* (Milan: Bompiani, 1994).

¹⁵⁶ Milan: Guerini, 1987. The volume collects papers delivered at a conference jointly organized by the universities of Parma and Erlangen-Nürnberg and held in Parma on 4-6 December 1986.

The advantage of such a heterogeneous volume lies in the possibility of breaking narrow definitions of travel writing in favour of a more flexible conception of the genre, which does not attempt to draw rigid distinctions between narrative and observation, fiction and reportage. Yet it is significant that even this volume keeps faith with the tradition of discussing 'la letteratura di viaggio' (rather than, 'la scrittura di viaggio'), thus confirming the aspiration to prove the 'literariness' of the texts under examination.

A wide definition of 'travel literature' is also adopted by the recently created Associazione Italiana di Studi sulla Letteratura di Viaggio, whose interests extend from areas which are more commonly the object of scrutiny by Italian critics, such as that of travel writing about the peninsula, to the work of Italian authors, to the promotion of literary prizes.¹⁵⁷ Yet even the activities of this association tend to marginalize contemporary texts, and it is symptomatic that its board should include mostly scholars whose interests are firmly grounded in the eighteenth and nineteenth century or earlier.¹⁵⁸

To date, the most systematic attempt to apply innovative critical approaches to contemporary Italian travel writing (and the only full length study of the subject) is Monica Farnetti's *Reportages: Letteratura di viaggio del Novecento italiano* (Milan: Guerini, 1992). Farnetti's study concentrates on the representation of the city in the work of twelve twentieth-century authors, ranging from Cardarelli to Gadda, Vittorini, Parise, Calvino and Ceronetti. Farnetti combines a discussion of the categories of time and space in travel

¹⁵⁷ One such initiative is the 'Premio Gubbio sulla Letteratura di Viaggio' held in June 1996. See Associazione Italiana di Studi sulla Letteratura di Viaggio, *Bollettino*, 1 (1995) and 2 (1996) for further details on the association, its members and its initiatives (including the 'Premio Gubbio'). In the first issue of the bulletin Giorgio Cusatelli describes the objectives of the group as 'lo studio e la classificazione, all'interno di un opportuno corpus bibliografico, della letteratura di viaggio concernente soprattutto l'Italia e di quella dei viaggiatori italiani operanti in reciprocità dall'età umanistica sino al nostro secolo' (p. 3).

¹⁵⁸ See the list of publications of Giorgio Cusatelli, Elvio Guagnini, Maurizio Bossi, Alida Fliri and Gianni Eugenio Viola in *Bollettino*, 1 (1995), pp. 15-29.

writing and of the representational issues implicit in the nature of the genre, with a detailed analysis of the ambiguous attitudes to this type of narrative which have characterized Italian criticism and literary historiography from the beginning of the twentieth century to our days. Yet Farnetti fails to overthrow precisely that tradition and ends up using most of its categories. The title of Farnetti's volume points to the main ambiguity in both the critical tradition she is analysing and her own approach: the reference to reportage is a reminder of the fact that Italian travel writing is mostly perceived (and criticized) as journalistic prose, rather than literature.

Farnetti's declared intention is to reflect 'sul problema, teorico e teoretico, della cosiddetta "letteratura di viaggio", una letteratura che è spazio deputato di uno dei grandi temi della cultura e che nel *reportage* non trova se non una, e per lo più fraintesa, possibilità di specificarsi' (p. 26). Yet her outlook remains informed by that same notion of 'literariness' she seems to be reacting against, so that her objective can only be to suggest 'come si possa riconoscere, sotto il profilo teorico come pure direttamente nel contesto della cultura italiana, una scrittura di viaggio di indiscutibile dignità intellettuale e letteraria, che consente [...] di accostarsi al genere senza negarsi la possibilità di imbattersi in opere di eccellente rilievo' (p. 23). As a result, Farnetti is obliged to set up an opposition between 'mere' and 'exceptional' reportages: her study intends to demonstrate 'come, accanto a *reportages* nel senso proprio del termine [...], si possano talvolta individuare *reportages* che definiremo d'eccezione' (p. 8).¹⁵⁹ Ultimately, the opposition can be reduced to a distinction between 'good' and 'bad' writing based precisely on that narrow notion of 'disincarnata

¹⁵⁹ The distinction between the two types of reportage is elaborated upon in the following lines: 'Quei *reportages* "impropri" che solo arbitrariamente (ma non per questo meno legittimamente) si classificano come tali, arricchiscono dunque il repertorio di un genere il quale, di contro, si intende sfrondare e snellire dei materiali "propri", sì, del genere stesso, ma privi di adeguata tensione, intellettuale e spesso anche formale, che li sostenga a un tempo come libri di viaggio e come vantaggiose occasioni conoscitive' (p. 8).

letterarietà' whose influence, as we have seen, is isolated by Cardona and Formisano as the main cause of the low status enjoyed by Italian travel writing as a whole:

Quanto sostanzialmente si vuol chiaro è lo scarto, all'interno del repertorio, fra pagine di debole o nulla tensione intellettuale (consistenti [...] in mere descrizioni, magari bozzetti, compilative frequenze di scene, paesaggi e vedute, stralci di color locale, osservazioni superficiali e vieti raffronti, magari, con la cultura di provenienza) e pagine invece di significativa pregnanza letteraria, che impegnano responsabilmente gli strumenti d'interpretazione del testo-paesaggio, naturale o urbano che sia. (pp. 8-9)¹⁶⁰

It is by ignoring this kind of aesthetic limitations, and including in his analysis any surfacing of the travel trope — whether in 'real' travel accounts, fiction or poetry — that Cachey, for instance, can remark on the essential role of travel in the Italian literary tradition. Cachey observes that the lack of canonization may in fact help to explain not only the centrality but also the 'cosmopolitan character and easy translatability' of Italian travel literature.¹⁶¹ In his analysis of the role and status of Italian travel writing, Cachey argues that while travel is at the core of the Italian literary tradition (starting from Dante and Petrarch themselves), the canon has resisted its recognition, largely because of the territorial vacuum to which Italian literature was reduced by the long absence of an Italian nation. As a consequence 'it has been through a series of idealized territories of language and literature that Italian literary identity has historically constituted itself' while its legacy has been 'uncannily disembodied and deterritorialized'. The final result has been that 'travel not directed toward Italy in this ideal linguistic and literary sense has represented a betrayal of the fundamental inspiration and trajectory of the Italian canon' (p. 56). In other words:

¹⁶⁰ It is also interesting to note that Farnetti has subsequently published a monograph on the theme of sea voyages in narrative, thus continuing the line of studies devoted to travel as a trope or motif of mainstream literary production; see M. Farnetti, *Il romanzo del mare: Morfologia e storia della narrativa marinara* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1996).

¹⁶¹ 'An Italian Literary History of Travel', p. 57.

travel as metaphor and literary trope has been deemed perfectly acceptable, but travel writing as such has not.

(iii.i) Travel Writing between Journalism and 'Literariness'

Despite the presence of original perspectives such as the one proposed by Cachey, the inability of Italian scholars like Farnetti to distance themselves from established categories which link Italian travel writing to journalism (via the notion of reportage) and to the issue of 'literariness' (a quality usually denied to the genre) testifies to the enduring strength of a critical interpretation which dates back at least to Croce and his scathing assessment of De Amicis as a travel writer.¹⁶²

Nineteenth-century Italian criticism had little attention for travel writing, and no trace of the genre is to be found, significantly, in the founding text of the literary historiography of unified Italy, Francesco De Sanctis's *Storia della letteratura italiana*, whose canonic thrust did not even allow for a mention of Marco Polo's *Milione*.¹⁶³ If

¹⁶² See above, section i.vi.

¹⁶³ De Sanctis's *Storia della letteratura italiana* was first published in 1870-71. On the national inspiration of De Sanctis's literary historiography see for instance Alberto Asor Rosa, 'La cultura', in *Storia d'Italia*, 6 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1972-76), IV, pp. 821-1664 (pp. 858-69); also published as 'L'ethos desanctisiano: una proposta politica per salvare l'eredità risorgimentale', in *Il punto su De Sanctis*, ed. by Marina Paladini Musitelli (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1988), pp. 149-54; Cesare Milanese, 'Introduzione' in F. De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Rome: Newton, 1991; 3rd edn 1997), pp. vii-xv. On the influence of De Sanctis see also *Teorie e realtà della storiografia letteraria: Guida storica e critica*, ed. by Giuseppe Petronio (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1981), especially pp. xxxv-xli. The motivations and the legacies of De Sanctis's construction of a unitary tradition based on great works and authors have been synthetically described by C. Dionisotti in *Geografia e storia della letteratura italiana*; Dionisotti was writing from the disillusioned perspective of a country which had just emerged from fascism and the second world war: 'Sempre avevamo creduto all'unità, e però a una storia d'Italia e a una storia della letteratura italiana. Ma sempre anche avevamo dubitato della struttura unitaria, che nell'età nostra era giunta a fare così trista prova di sé, e però anche di quella corrispondente storia d'Italia e della letteratura italiana, che era stata prodotta nell'età risorgimentale. Né il fatto che, a differenza della storia politica, proprio la storia della letteratura prodotta allora avesse ottenuto dal De Sanctis la forma del capolavoro, poteva in alcun modo attenuare il dubbio. Quella storia splendidamente rappresentava l'istanza unitaria del Risorgimento e il decisivo apporto del Regno di Napoli alla causa dell'unità. Ma per ciò stesso e per i caratteri propri della storia del Regno [...] ci si poteva chiedere se essa

nineteenth-century premises were not particularly favourable to the appreciation of marginal genres (and the newly achieved 'territorialization' did not encourage a less 'disembodied' ideal of literature), throughout the twentieth century what debate there has been among Italian critics and historians of literature on the subject of travel writing has mostly revolved around the vexed dichotomy of literature and journalism. The main question concerning the genre seems to have constantly revolved around its aesthetic nature and its subsequent status as 'art' — that is to say an approach strongly oriented towards the production, rather than the reception, of texts.

Early on, we see the equation between journalism and travel writing being reinforced by the negative remarks of critics and by their association of 'the travel piece' with a new phenomenon: the 'terza pagina', that is the cultural page which became widely spread among the quality newspapers of Italy from the very beginning of our century.¹⁶⁴ Travel writing soon became a main component of this new journalistic phenomenon, starting with Barzini's reportages in the *Corriere della Sera*.¹⁶⁵ The popularity of travel

anche non rappresentasse, coi suoi tratti semplici e decisi, la sopraffazione spiccia che ai fini dell'unità era stata imposta alle differenze reali e tradizionali della vecchia Italia. [...] Onde la tendenza a disistimare le tradizioni e questioni linguistiche letterarie che in tanto apparivano nello sfondo della vecchia Italia, in quanto per l'appunto ne avevano costituito il fondo e ne avevano per secoli retto la struttura, e per contro la tendenza a isolare in figura sovrumana e profetica i grandi autori, così gettando inconsapevolmente i semi di quella idolatria eroica, che doveva in seguito ritorcersi a danno dei principî stessi, liberali e democratici, propri dell'età risorgimentale' (pp. 12-13).

¹⁶⁴ The birth of the terza pagina is often dated to December 1901, when the *Giornale d'Italia* devoted a whole page to reviews of the opening of D'Annunzio's *Francesca da Rimini*. On the origins and history of the terza pagina see Enrico Falqui, *Nostra "Terza pagina"* (Rome: Canesi, [n.d.]), especially pp. 7-26; Enrico Falqui, *Inchiesta sulla terza pagina* (Turin: ERI, 1953); Enrico Falqui, *Giornalismo e letteratura* (Milan: Mursia, 1969); Nello Ajello, 'Storia della Terza Pagina', *Nord e Sud*, 9.32 (August 1962), 100-123; Vittorio Capecchi and Marino Livolsi, *La stampa quotidiana in Italia* (Milan: Bompiani, 1971), pp. 90-93; on the relationship between the terza pagina and travel writing see also Franco Trequadrini, 'Come e perché la letteratura di viaggio', in *Viaggio alienazione ed altro* (Manfredonia: Atlantica, 1980), pp. 15-65.

¹⁶⁵ Falqui, in *Giornalismo e letteratura* (p. 46), remarks: 'gli argomenti della terza pagina s'impreziosivano della pura letteratura o si estendevano fino alla cronaca leggera o alla medicina. Senza contare che il piatto forte spesso era costituito da una pagina "di colore" degli inviati speciali, tra cui eccellevano Barzini, Civinini, Simoni (dalla Cina) ed altri noiosissimi, che quando descrivevano veri e propri avvenimenti erano pubblicati in prima pagina.'

pieces can be explained in terms of the kind of reading public the terza pagina was designed to attract:

una borghesia colta che, pur anelando ad uscire dal cerchio provinciale della propria piccola comunità, sognava in realtà un mondo assai poco cosmopolita, che aveva come confine le città vicine più importanti e la loro “immaginata” vita culturale. Al massimo si aveva un generico e mitizzato sfondo di lontane città straniere, Parigi e Londra in prima fila.¹⁶⁶

For the next few decades, travel pieces would remain one of the main ingredients of the terza pagina.¹⁶⁷ Such popularity constantly reinforced the privileged association between travel writing and journalism, keeping the debate on the genre confined to a peculiarly narrow field; while the fact that the vast majority of Italian writers of fame had to contribute to newspapers in order to achieve some financial stability also favoured an instrumental and ‘impure’ (that is to say both compromised and un-inspired) vision of their journalistic pieces. According to Franco Nesi, for instance, ‘la terza pagina è un fenomeno di povertà’: Italian readers were too poor to buy books; writers, as a consequence, were also poor; so ‘il nuovo ricco, il giornalismo’ stepped in.¹⁶⁸ Travel, in particular, was an

¹⁶⁶ Capecchi and Livolsi, *La stampa quotidiana in Italia*, p. 92. A similar profile still characterized the reader of the cultural pages at the end of the 1960s, when a survey found that travel reportages included in Italian newspapers were mainly popular among educated professionals (Capecchi and Livolsi, pp. 176-77).

¹⁶⁷ A survey conducted in 1969 revealed that Italian newspapers tended to devote to travel a larger percentage of space than their European counterparts. The survey included seven Italian and nine European newspapers, subdivided into three categories: national, local and evening papers. Italian national dailies systematically recorded the highest percentages of space devoted to travel: 3.3 percent for *Il Giorno*, 2.4 for *La Stampa*, 2.3 for the *Corriere della Sera* and 1.7 for *Il Messaggero*. Abroad, the highest percentage was recorded by *France Soir* (1.5 percent), followed the *Abend Post* and *Die Welt* with 1.3. The highest score among British papers was recorded for the *Daily Express* (1.1 percent). Three of the papers examined devoted less than 1 percent of their space to travel: *The Evening News* (0.8 percent), the *Daily Press* (0.4) and the *Weinheimer Nachrichten* (0.1); see Capecchi and Livolsi, *La stampa quotidiana in Italia*, pp. 237-53 (pp. 238-39).

¹⁶⁸ Franco Nesi, *Il peso della carta* (Bologna: Alfa, 1966), quoted in E. Falqui, *Giornalismo e letteratura*, pp. 14-15. The issue of poverty is linked to the size of the Italian book market which, even after the economic boom of the 1960s and the substantial increase in the average level of education in Italy, remains quite small in comparison to other European countries. For a detailed quantitative analysis of the problem see Francesco Silva, Marco Gambaro, Giovanni Cesare Bianco, *Indagine sull'editoria: Il libro come bene economico e*

expensive activity which according to Emilio Cecchi many Italian writers could only afford when financed by newspapers:

Un articolo sul giornale ha (se così posso esprimermi) delle “percentuali” molto più alte di quelle del libro. E queste forme di giornalismo hanno aperto anche da noi la strada ai viaggi, alle esperienze di civiltà lontane. Le nostre generazioni hanno cominciato a viaggiare, a vedere il mondo, con le guerre e con i giornali: c’è poco da fare. [...] Per molti di noi la “terza pagina” è stata la sola forma di “borse di studio” che ci è stata accessibile; ed erano “borse di studio” che ci eravamo guadagnate col nostro lavoro; perché se i giornali ce lo concedevano, facendoci viaggiare, era anche perché ciò tornava utile a loro.¹⁶⁹

In 1953 Enrico Falqui, by far the most prolific analyst of the terza pagina, expressed a positive view of its connection to Italian travel writing, maintaining that ‘i giornali e gli scrittori hanno già dato alla letteratura di viaggi alcuni tra i più bei libri del nostro Novecento: da Cecchi a Comisso, da Bacchelli ad Angioletti, da Barilli a Malaparte’, and confidently predicting a bright future for the genre, since ‘tutto lascia credere che la serie non sia per esaurirsi’.¹⁷⁰ Yet even Falqui’s argument is strongly dependent on a distinction between literature and journalism, between ‘inviati’ and ‘viaggiatori’, ‘per il differente modo e intento del rispettivo lavoro’:¹⁷¹

culturale (Turin: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1992), pp. 32-33. Guido Piovene expressed similar, though slightly less pessimistic, views, asserting that ‘l’unione tra letteratura e giornalismo in Italia ha due ragioni, una negativa e l’altra positiva’. The first is poverty: the majority of Italian writers cannot survive on literature alone; they must take up a second job and their best option is journalism, ‘che almeno si esercita con la penna’. The second, positive reason for the association of the two types of writing is, according to Piovene, ‘il gusto dell’arte’ which characterizes Italian people and means that they require from their papers more than ‘la notizia, l’informazione arida, disadorna, cruda, “brutta”’ (quoted in Falqui, *Nostra “Terza pagina”*, p. 166). Even Malaparte considered the terza pagina essentially as an instrument which writers could use to prepare themselves for the real task of literary creation: ‘La verità è che la terza pagina va considerata come banco di scuola e banco di prova: origine umile, se si vuole, origine artigiana di una letteratura, quella del nostro secolo, che senza rinnegare la tradizione vi ha introdotto uno spirito nuovo, profondamente, e spesso acerbamente, moderno’ (quoted in Falqui, *Giornalismo e letteratura*, p. 85).

¹⁶⁹ E. Cecchi, quoted in Falqui, *Inchiesta sulla terza pagina*, p. 106.

¹⁷⁰ Falqui, *Inchiesta sulla terza pagina*, p. 139. Falqui reviewed many of the travel books published by Italian authors in the first half of this century. His pieces can now be read in E. Falqui, *Novecento letterario italiano*, vol. III, *Narratori e prosatori: da D’Annunzio a C. E. Gadda* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1970).

¹⁷¹ Falqui, *Nostra “Terza pagina”*, p. 156-57.

Arrivar primi: ecco l'imperativo categorico da cui è tiranneggiata la produzione dell'inviato-speciale. Arrivar primi e fare colpo. Non così i letterati viaggianti. Ad essi è consentito convertire le impressioni in ricordi, le immagini in riflessioni, depositandole nel taccuino, finché, tornati a casa, le riordinano e le stendono con armonia e rigore. La loro è una "specialità" diversa; più libera ma nel contempo più vincolata dalle leggi artistiche; e non va confusa. (p. 151)

So for Falqui (just as for Farnetti forty years later) travel writers can be divided into 'gli eccezionali (e sono gli scrittori)' and 'i normali (e sono i giornalisti)'. And it is the literary character of their writing which will ultimately distinguish one from the other.¹⁷²

(iii.ii) The Legacy of Croce

In 1936 Alfredo Gargiulo had taken a similar critical stand maintaining that Italian travel literature of the twentieth century 'attesta l'elevamento della nostra prosa d'arte', while at the same time reducing it to pure 'visione di luoghi' and associating it primarily with journalism:

Si potrebbe definirla come quella che trova posto, di solito, nei grandi quotidiani; e concerne gli aspetti complessi d'un paese nelle impressioni di un viaggiatore. [...]

Ora, estendiamo l'idea di "viaggio"; facciamo che abbracci tanto, da poterla invece designare con un altro nome: "visione di luoghi". E la "visione di luoghi" non è stata forse un tema frequente negli scrittori di cui parliamo? Ma riportiamoci addirittura ai primordi di questa letteratura "nuova": con alla mano i documenti, non si sarebbe perfino tentati di accusarla di un eccessivo "paesismo"? E più conta, inoltre, la motivazione di quei "paesaggi": nei quali, in genere, non tanto era palese la tendenza degli autori a una

¹⁷² Falqui makes the distinction even more explicitly in the following passage: 'In quanto alla distinzione dell'autore, essa è dovuta più al suo effettivo valore che alla sua differente provenienza. La distinzione tra giornalista e scrittore è basata sulla qualità, e la qualità del giornalista è sempre meno in contrasto con quella dello scrittore, senza che lo scrittore abbia rinunciato al pregio e al prestigio della propria, ché anzi è venuto ragionevolmente sempre più adeguandola alla destinazione giornalistica di quel particolare tipo di componimento che prende il nome di "articolo" e che conserva le particolari caratteristiche dell'autore, nonostante la comune destinazione' (*Nostra "Terza pagina"*, pp. 155-56).

risoluzione lirica, quanto un loro bisogno di obiettivarsi, “uscir da sé”, liberarsi comunque dell’informe sentimento.¹⁷³

Along similar lines, in 1947, Pietro Pancrazi portrayed the figure of the ‘inviato speciale’ or ‘giornalista viaggiante’:

Così all’ingrosso si può anche dire che, ai primi del secolo, nei giornali c’era bensi la cronaca e c’era la letteratura; c’erano l’invenzione il pittoresco il colore, e c’erano gli avvenimenti i fatti le “cose vere”; ma generalmente vi comparivano in rubriche e settori separati e diversi. [...]

Più tardi i diritti del colore e della letteratura nel giornalismo viaggiante e non viaggiante aumentarono fino a diventar prepotenti. Le condizioni di prima si rovesciarono: lo scrittore fu tutto e le cose ch’egli diceva o non diceva quasi nulla. Le immagini tennero vece dei ragionamenti, le impressioni valsero più della logica. Se gli piaceva il giornalista-letterato poteva andare al polo all’equatore o sulla luna soltanto per raccontarci, una settimana dopo l’altra, per colonne e colonne, le reazioni della sua epidermide o della sua retina a quelle altitudini. Nelle corrispondenze di viaggio, tutto o quasi tutto poté ridursi a fatto personale. E se qualcuno sapeva scegliere e trattare il fatto personale come avviso e anticipo di una realtà maggiore, i più, i più giovani e disarmati, finirono per darci un giornalismo tutto d’impressione e di tavolozza.¹⁷⁴

Travel literature is thus disparaged because dominated by facts, because reality impinges on its literariness — but it is also deemed likely to produce bad journalism precisely due to its excessive attention to form over content.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ A. Gargiulo, ‘A proposito di letteratura di viaggi’, *Gazzetta del popolo*, 29 December 1936, now in Falqui, *Nostra “Terza pagina”*, pp. 369-72 (pp. 369-70).

¹⁷⁴ P. Pancrazi, ‘L’inviato speciale’, *Corriere della sera*, 21 September 1947; now in Falqui, *Nostra “Terza pagina”*, pp. 366-68 (pp. 367-68). On Gargiulo, Pancrazi and their different brands of criticism see Luigi Russo, *La critica letteraria contemporanea*, rev. edn (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), pp. 484-511 and pp. 576-602. Pancrazi’s attack on the descriptive and impressionistic nature of travel literature was echoed in the 1960s by Debenedetti’s distinction between a type of writing devoted ‘al documentarismo descrittivo, all’idea di far concorrenza a una serie di cartoline illustrate’ and the need to focus on ‘l’originalità del punto di vista’; see Giacomo Debenedetti, *Il romanzo del Novecento* (Milan: Garzanti, 1982), pp. 326-27.

¹⁷⁵ Significantly, Pancrazi concluded that during the period of the fascist regime all journalists ‘impararono a fumare senza nicotina’, and expressed his hope for a future in which Italian newspapers would contain ‘più sillogismo e meno tavolozza’ (‘L’inviato speciale’, p. 368). Pancrazi also argued that the fascist regime had encouraged ‘questo giornalismo soltanto letterario e di colore’ in the hope that it would cover up ‘gli spazi lasciati in bianco dalla ragione’ (p. 368). Similar views on the development of Italian literary journalism are expressed in Capecchi and Livolsi, *La stampa quotidiana in Italia*, pp. 92-93.

Croce himself had intervened in the debate concerning the terza pagina. Discussing whether literary historiography should or should not include journalistic production, he treated the whole issue as 'la solita confusione tra storia letteraria propriamente detta e storia degli interessi e fatti pratici' and insisted that the only answer to the question consisted 'nel negare la domanda stessa'.¹⁷⁶ According to Croce the term 'giornalismo' is used 'anzitutto, in significato letterario come termine dispregiativo per designare un gruppo di prodotti letterari di qualità inferiore' — and once the equivalence between journalism and bad literature has been established it is only tautological that the latter should be excluded from a history of literature (pp. 129-30). Yet excellent works of literature first appeared in newspapers, and there is no reason to exclude these from critical appreciation: 'Insomma: o per giornalismo s'intende l'occasione e il modo primitivo di divulgazione, e la tesi è apertamente falsa: o s'intende la cattiva letteratura, e allora non c'è ragione di chiamarla giornalismo' (p. 131).

Ultimately, Croce denies the existence of a separate (or hybrid) genre of literary journalism, reducing the issue to the question of the artistic quality of individual works and their subsequent staying power.¹⁷⁷ This perspective is perfectly coherent with Croce's distinctions between *poesia* and *non poesia*, art and simple prose — distinctions which he preferred to traditional theories of genre. Croce appreciated the importance of the history of

¹⁷⁶ B. Croce, 'Il giornalismo e la storia della letteratura', *Problemi di estetica*, 6th edn (Bari: Laterza, 1966; 1st edn 1910), pp. 129-33 (p. 129). The piece was originally written in 1908.

¹⁷⁷ Croce develops the idea in the same essay: 'Perché quando si è Demostene, non si è giornalisti, ma Demostene; quando una pagina è degna di antologia, è cosa d'arte e non di giornalismo. [...] Come da tutti se ne può fare esperienza, i medesimi articoli, che erano sembrati belli ed efficaci nel momento in cui apparvero, riletti nelle pagine di un libro non paiono i medesimi. Passate le circostanze pratiche, le quali, mercé il fervore prodotto negli animi, colmavano le lacune dell'espressione, facevano sorvolare sulle sue indeterminanze, abbreviavano le lungherie, rendevano tollerabili le frasi logore, quegli scritti si svelano, per troppi rispetti, difettosi; e, se restano come documenti storici, artisticamente invece sono morti, appunto perchè, come tali, non furono mai abbastanza vivi' (p. 132).

the theory of genres, but he firmly believed that the notion of genre had been made redundant by contemporary aesthetics.¹⁷⁸

It is easy to see the influence of Croce in the obsessive return of the critical discussion on travel writing among Italian critics to its 'literariness' (or lack of it) rather than to its generic characters. And it is also easy to discern the legacy of Croce's reduction of the issue to a distinction between what is literature (and does not need to be called or classified by other names) and what is not (and should remain ignored, uncollected, uncriticized — invisible) in recent attitudes to Italian travel writing: in the trend to reduce travel to a topos; or in the effort to divide 'exceptional' from 'ordinary' reportage; or even in the need to justify the republication of 'journalistic' pieces in volume format.¹⁷⁹

Croce's influence also helps to explain the bias shown by most subsequent Italian critics against the factual nature of travel writing. According to Croce, art is the product of pure intuition, and 'l'intuizione pura è essenzialmente liricità':¹⁸⁰

Ciò che piace e si cerca nell'arte, ciò che fa balzare il cuore e rapisce d'ammirazione è la vita, il movimento, la commozione, il calore, il sentimento dell'artista questo soltanto dà il criterio supremo per distinguere le opere di arte vera da quelle di arte falsa, le indovinate dalle sbagliate [...] Non solo i pensieri più profondi e la cultura più squisita, ma anche la ricchezza delle immagini e l'abilità e sicurezza nel riprodurre il reale, nel

¹⁷⁸ Croce made his position polemically clear in a 'postilla' written in 1939 on the occasion of a congress on literary genres held in Lyon in the same year; see B. Croce, 'I "generi letterari" a congresso', in *Pagine sparse*, vol. III, *Postille: Osservazioni su libri nuovi*, 2nd rev. edn (Bari: Laterza, 1960), pp. 70-71. In a highly ironic passage Croce writes: 'I "generi letterari" si sono riuniti a congresso in Lione sulla fine del maggio scorso, la qual cosa non avrebbero osato fare in Italia, perché qui accadde loro, una quarantina d'anni fa, un infortunio da cui non si sono più rialzati. Anche l'unico italiano, che abbia partecipato con una comunicazione a quel congresso, ha cominciato col protestare che egli "non nega il pensiero teorico discusso e sostenuto dal moderno pensiero critico, che nell'opera d'arte vede assorbita la tecnica del genere letterario, il quale si identifica con la forma spirituale dell'artista". [...] In verità, l'abolizione dei "generi letterari" come criterî di giudizio è un "mors tua vita mea" per la critica, trattandosi di risolvere se questa debba ubbidire all'unica sovranità della coscienza estetica o a una folla di piccole tirannelle, di leggi indipendenti e contrastanti' (p. 70). On Croce's adversity to genre see also Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), pp. 77-80; on the influence of Croce's positions on 'new genres' such as journalism see E. Falqui, *Nostra "Terza pagina"*, pp. 284-94.

¹⁷⁹ See the observations on Moravia's travel books in section i.iv above.

¹⁸⁰ B. Croce, 'L'intuizione pura e il carattere lirico dell'arte', in *Problemi di estetica*, pp. 1-30 (p. 22).

descrivere, nel dipingere, nel comporre, questa e ogni altra sapienza non può redimere un'opera d'arte che si giudichi fredda. (pp. 17-18)¹⁸¹

Consequently, imagination takes precedence, in art, over description ('l'arte si regge solo sulla fantasia, la sola sua ricchezza sono le immagini', p. 14), and sensitivity is the mark of intuition:

il contenuto dell'intuizione pura non può essere né un concetto astratto, né un concetto speculativo o idea, né una rappresentazione concettualizzata ossia storicizzata; e, di conseguenza, neppure una così detta percezione, la quale è rappresentazione intellettualmente discriminata e storicizzata. [...] L'intuizione pura, non producendo concetti, non può rappresentare se non la volontà nelle sue manifestazioni, ossia non può rappresentare altro che stati d'animo. [...] Dove questo manca, manca l'arte, proprio perché manca l'intuizione pura, e, tutt'al più, vi ha in cambio quella riflessa, filosofica, storica, o scientifica. (pp. 22-23)

Furthermore 'la percezione di un oggetto fisico in quanto tale non è un atto poetico o artistico':

l'arte rifà idealmente ed esprime la mia istantanea situazione; e l'immagine, da lei prodotta, si scioglie dal tempo e dallo spazio, e può essere rifatta e ricontemplata nella sua idealità-realtà da ogni punto del tempo e dello spazio. Appartiene non al mondo ma al sopramondo, non all'attimo fuggente ma all'eternità. Perciò la vita passa e l'arte resta. (p. 27)

Consequently truthfulness ('sincerità', understood as faithfulness to reality) cannot be a criterion of artistic merit, for art 'non classifica gli oggetti, non li pronunzia reali o immaginari, non li qualifica, non li definisce: li sente e rappresenta' (p. 14). Croce invokes

¹⁸¹ For examples of Croce's application of these principles to the study of individual authors and works see for instance his *Poesia e non poesia: Note sulla letteratura europea del secolo decimonono*, 4th rev. edn (Bari: Laterza, 1946). In his 'Avvertenza' Croce points out that the essays collected in the volume were part of a larger project designed to re-examine nineteenth-century literature 'per riportare sempre la considerazione alla poesia, che è (quantunque di tal cosa parecchi che fan mestiere di critici facilmente si dimentichino) ciò che deve formare l'assunto proprio della critica e della storia letteraria' (p. vii).

the authority of Aristotle to endorse the claim that in art 'non regna distinzione di vero o di falso' (p. 28). Reality is then dismissed as a guarantee of truth, which is rather to be understood as an aesthetic function. It is only the perfect fusion of form and content and its expression of the artist's passions which will achieve artistic truth:

Quando dagli animali impagliati dei musei zoologici, dai preparati anatomici, dalle tabelle di cifre [...] si passa alle pagine dei poeti, ai quadri dei pittori, alle melodie dei compositori, a guardare la realtà con occhio d'artista, si ha l'impressione di essere passati dalla morte alla vita, dall'astratto al concreto, dal fittizio al reale, e si è tratti a esclamare che solo nell'arte e nella contemplazione estetica è la verità. (p. 29)

For Croce, the truth inherent in art is of a different yet superior kind from the truths offered by science and history, or, indeed, from the ephemeral truth of journalism, of impressionistic 'descrittivismo', of the 'visione di luoghi' and of many other of the labels to which travel writing has been reduced during the last century by Italian critics. The only factor which can decide the quality of a travel account (or, indeed, of any other type of writing) is its artistic quality, its literariness. And this may also explain why the issue of faithfulness, often central in the discussion of travel literature among foreign scholars, does not seem to arise among Italian critics.¹⁸²

After the Second World War, Croce's legacy was partly reinforced by the strong influence of Italian Marxist criticism and by the advent of formalism.¹⁸³ Gianfranco Contini remembered that in the wake of Croce's death 'riuscire postcroceiani senza essere

¹⁸² See Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion of questions of faithfulness and authority in travel writing.

¹⁸³ On the many 'critical schools' of the last forty years and their respective influence on Italian culture see *Critica sotto inchiesta: Le nuove correnti metodologiche e la critica militante*, ed. by Mario Miccichesì; D'Arco Silvio Avalle, *L'analisi letteraria in Italia: Formalismo, strutturalismo, semiologia* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1970); and *I metodi attuali della critica*, ed. by Maria Corti and Cesare Segre (Rome: ERI, 1970); in the last two volumes mentioned, marxist criticism (with its sociological developments) and formalism (with its structuralist and semiologic follow-up) emerge as the most substantial and lasting trends of contemporary Italian criticism.

anticrociani' was the main goal of a younger generation of critics.¹⁸⁴ If early in the century 'la diffusione intellettuale del marxismo in Italia [...] si può far risalire quasi esclusivamente all'apostolato antilluministico di Croce' (p. 31), the true link between the Crocean and the Marxist lineages is to be found elsewhere, in an approach to criticism based on notions of value and form:

Del crocianesimo in senso proprio quello che va rifiutato è il teologismo risorgente dalla sua antica semenza hegeliana: teologismo egualmente prospero da parte marxistica (nonostante, anche qui, le pretese metodologiche), di dove non è affatto venuto lo sperato appoggio a un nuovo positivismo. Di anticrocianesimo si potrebbe discorrere soltanto il giorno in cui fosse abbandonato il criterio della distinzione, l'eredità dei "valori"; anche se possa accentuarsi la riserva circa una metafisicizzabile dottrina delle forme, la cui storia peraltro [...] è venuta accentuando la propria elasticità. (pp. 53-54)

Contini's assessment is shared by Jauss, who offers (from a European, rather than an Italian perspective) a limpid analysis of the way in which Croce's idealist aesthetics, the Marxist school and the Formalists share the belief in a canon of great works — although their canons are clearly different. What particularly concerns Jauss is the disregard for truly historical perspectives which characterizes all these schools, as well as the work of Curtius and his followers in the area of stylistic and philological criticism:

the research into tradition neutralized the lived praxis of history when it sought the focal point of knowledge in the origin or in the atemporal continuity of tradition, and not in the presence and uniqueness of a literary phenomenon. [...] The continuity of the classical heritage, raised to the highest idea, appeared in Ernst Robert Curtius's monumental work (which set a legion of epigonal *topoi*-researchers to work) in the tension between creation and imitation, between "great literature" [Dichtung] and "mere literature" that is immanent in the literary tradition and not historically mediated: a timeless classicism of masterpieces raised itself above that which Curtius called the "unbreakable chain, the tradition of mediocrity," and left history behind as *terra incognita*.

¹⁸⁴ *L'influenza culturale di Benedetto Croce* (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1967), p. 7.

The gap between the historical and the aesthetic consideration of literature is no more spanned here than it already was in Benedetto Croce's literary theory, with its division of poetry and nonpoetry held *ad absurdum*. The antagonism between pure literature [Dichtung] and time-bound literature was only to be overcome when its founding aesthetics was put into question [...] Literary sociology and the work-immanent method disassociated themselves from the approaches of the positivist and idealist schools. They widened even further the gap between history and literature [Dichtung]. This is most clearly seen in the opposed literary theories of the Marxist and Formalist schools.¹⁸⁵

The social thrust of Marxist criticism 'held to the traditional series of masterpieces and great authors, since their originality seemed to be interpretable as immediate insight into the social process'. As a consequence:

the dimensions specific to the historicity of literature are [...] obviously diminished. For an important work, one that indicates a new direction in the literary process, is surrounded by an unsurveyable production of works that correspond to the traditional expectations or images concerning reality, and that thus in their social index are to be no less valued than the solitary novelty of the great work that is often comprehended only later. (p. 12)

Though moving from opposite premises (based on the notion of the autonomy of art, rather than its social role) the Formalists at least initially proposed a similar dissociation of literature from its historical complexity:

The theory of the formal method raised literature once again to an independent object of study when it detached the theory of the literary work from all historical conditions and like the new structural linguistics defined its specific result purely formally, as "the sum-total of all the stylistic devices employed in it". (p. 16)¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 9.

¹⁸⁶ In the following pages Jauss recognizes, however, that, especially in the work of Viktor Shklovsky, formalism came very near to formulating a theory of the historicity of artistic forms (pp. 17-18).

In Italy the influence of Marxism on the one hand, and Formalism on the other combined with the Crocean inheritance to make any innovative approaches to genres such as travel writing extremely improbable, given their non-canonic and marginal status, their doubtful 'literariness' and their apparent inability to produce innovative masterpieces.

In more recent years a small number of studies have attempted a reassessment of the question — yet escaping the old frame of mind is not easy. Trequadrini, for instance, while setting out to demonstrate that twentieth-century travel writing 'non è più stato un *divertissement* ma un lavoro sempre più connesso, per vincoli culturali e politici, alle esigenze creative dell'attività letteraria', still traces the origins of Italian travel writing to the establishment of journalistic prose and its audience, or sees in Luigi Barzini Senior the father of both contemporary Italian journalism and contemporary Italian travel writing.¹⁸⁷ Looking back at the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Luca Clerici claims that in Italy, at critical moments, the genre lacked a strong model and a definite audience, and ended up making 'scelte stilistiche che disegnano un pubblico di estrazione culturale medio bassa'.¹⁸⁸ While the views of Giorgio Pullini articulate once again the main difficulty encountered by the Italian critical tradition in dealing with travel writing, that is the problem of factual versus literary nature of the text:

La letteratura di viaggio più di ogni altro genere letterario è ancorata al momento pratico dell'esperienza: un viaggio [...] resta sempre condizionato dai dati di fatto imprescindibili del luogo e del tempo rispetto ai generi più autonomi della letteratura creativa vera e propria (poesia, romanzo, teatro).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ Trequadrini, 'Come e perché la letteratura di viaggio', pp. 15-21.

¹⁸⁸ L. Clerici, 'La letteratura di viaggio', p. 606.

¹⁸⁹ Giorgio Pullini, "'Letteratura di viaggio" nel dopoguerra', in *Letteratura Italiana*, vol. VII, *Novecento: I. contemporanei*, ed. by Gianni Grana (Milan: Marzorati, 1979), pp. 6914-22 (p. 6914). Significantly, Pullini ends up drawing distinctions between real writers, professional journalists, writers-turned-journalists, journalists-turned-writers.

Yet even Pullini ends up remarking how today Italian travel writing 'ha un suo momento felice' and is turning into 'il punto d'incontro degli interessi più vivi della cultura e della letteratura contemporanea.' The reasons he gives for this popularity, though, tend to assimilate travel writing to something not too dissimilar from English 'faction': 'il pubblico vi trova la discussione e la sintetizzazione dei problemi più assillanti del suo tempo.' Should we need any proof that the old dichotomies are still around, Pullini had just prefaced that remark with this sentence: 'Il giornalista si fa saggista e scrittore, lo scrittore testimone e investigatore della società in un più diretto e vasto dialogo con i lettori' (pp. 6921-22).

The evident and unresolved contradiction of these positions has been pointed out by Cardona, in the passage which contains the already quoted reference to 'disembodied literariness':

Eppure la letteratura italiana non inquadra volentieri nel suo canone i viaggi, di cui pure è ricca; quasi che i molti dati materiali e concreti di cui essi sono necessariamente costruiti inquinino in qualche modo un ideale di disinteressata e disincarnata letterarietà; quasi che paesi e costumi ed eventi possano diventare riconosciuta provincia letteraria solo quando li marchi il segno dell'invenzione, del fantastico.¹⁹⁰

Reality is still seen as a limitation to literary creation, which in turn means that the critics of travel literature in contemporary Italy apparently expect neat boundaries to be drawn between fact and fiction, description and narration, while at the same time refusing to analyse the genre, its forms, its products and its conventions in their historically determined reality.

¹⁹⁰ R. Cardona, 'I viaggi e le scoperte', p.686.

When it comes to travel writing, then, Italian literary criticism seems unable to disentangle itself from a double set of reductive criteria. On the one hand, those concerning content, which focus on the experiential nature of the travel account, and, as a consequence, limit travel writing to factual and unashamedly autobiographical accounts of real journeys (hence the journalistic assumption, the reportage). On the other hand we find criteria concerning style, which in travel writing is expected to be descriptive, often sentimental, picturesque, impressionistic, exotic, and so on. The combination of the two perspectives denies travel writing its aspirations to literary status and even its existence as a genre, while critics continue to prefer to distinguish only between literary and non-literary works, condemning the latter to the ephemeral and invisible life of 'journalism'.

2. TRAVEL WRITING IN TRANSLATION: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

(i) The Issue of Genre

The Italian critical tradition, as noted at the end of the previous chapter, not only denies Italian travel writing visibility but is also tendentially hostile to its identification as a genre. This helps to explain the paradox noted at the very beginning of this study, that even at a time in which travel writing enjoys increasing popularity among the Italian public, both authors, publishers and reviewers tend to avoid the label when discussing contemporary Italian works (unless they are immediately identified as ‘journalism’ or ‘reportage’ as in the case of the volumes by Italian authors published in the Feltrinelli/Traveller series). As a result, contemporary Italian travel writing is a genre in disguise, leading a submerged life among ‘occasional prose’, ‘minor works’, ‘saggistica’, and other similar labels. This situation makes any analysis of Italian travel writing particularly difficult, since there are no established repertoires nor any operative definitions of the genre, whether normative or descriptive, with which to work.

Contrasting present and past conceptions of genre, Zygmunt Baranski recently pointed out that there is currently a high degree of consensus in defining genre as ‘a particular system of interconnections between formal and thematic elements which defines a set of texts and which distinguishes this class from other, similarly distinctively structured textual groupings’.¹ Neither content nor form alone can satisfy the requirements of such a

¹ Z. G. Baranski, ‘Medieval Literature, “Genre”, and Dante’, in ‘*Libri poetarum quattuor species dividuntur*’: *Essays on Dante and ‘Genre’*, ed. by Z. G. Baranski, supplement of *The Italianist*, 15 (1995), 9-60 (p. 11). On contemporary genre theory see also Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of*

definition of genre: it is not sufficient to point to the presence of the theme of travel, nor, for instance, to the picaresque structure of a narrative in order to qualify a text as suitable for inclusion under the generic label 'travel writing'. What is required is a definition capable not only of describing the texts to be included in the group, but also of distinguishing them from other genres with which they may share some characteristics.²

Such normative definitions of genre are still very similar to the ones Croce contrasted with his notions of 'poesia' and 'non poesia'. The approach to genre, however, does not need to advocate rigid distinctions and a critical practice which consists in allocating each text to its rightful slot and then judging it according to the rules and conventions traditionally identified with it. Scholars of travel writing, in particular, have recently pointed out the importance of an approach which does not so much attempt to define, delimit and isolate travel writing in terms of its poetics, but rather intends to explore its functions, its ideologies, its codes of representation, and the way these become embedded in textual features. Mary Louise Pratt makes this approach particularly explicit when she defines her *Imperial Eyes* as 'a study in genre as well as a critique of ideology' (p. 10):

Scholarship on travel and exploration literature, such as it exists, has tended to develop along neither of these lines. Often it is celebratory [...] In other instances it is documentary [...] More recently, an estheticist or literary vein of scholarship has developed, in which travel accounts, usually by famous literary figures, are studied in

Genres and modes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); *Théorie des genres* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), ed. by Gerard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov; Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, trans. by Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For an Italian perspective see Maria Corti, *Principi della comunicazione letteraria* (Milan: Bompiani, 1976), pp. 149-81.

² The point is specifically made by Corti (*Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, pp. 156-57), who maintains that 'è significativa entro un genere non tanto la presenza di alcuni contenuti, temi o motivi, che come tali possono essere comuni a più generi letterari [...], bensì il rapporto fra l'organizzazione tematica e il piano formale, senza di che non vi è genere'. Corti (with a reference to Eco's *Le forme del contenuto* (Milan: Bompiani, 1971)) emphasizes that '[non] sarebbe il caso di parlare di codici se non ci fossero regole di interazione fra forma del contenuto e forma dell'espressione' (p. 157).

the artistic and intellectual dimensions and with reference to European existential dilemmas. I am doing none of these things. With respect to genre, I have attempted here to pay serious attention to the conventions of representation that constitute European travel writing, identifying different strands, suggesting ways of reading and focuses for rhetorical analysis. [...] The study of tropes often serves to unify corpuses and define genres in terms, for example, of shared repertoires of devices and conventions (and yet it is, of course, the corpuses that create the repertoires). My aim here, however, is not to define or codify. I have sought to use the study of tropes as much to disunify as to unify what one might call a rhetoric of travel writing. I have aimed not to circumscribe travel writing as a genre but to suggest its heterogeneity and its interactions with other kinds of expression. (pp. 10-11)³

Recent genre theory and criticism have been moving in this same direction. Maria Corti, for instance, has stated the need to overcome deductive, abstract and normative conceptions of genre in favour of inductive and historical ones.⁴ And it is significant that one of the most prominent contemporary scholars of genre, Tzvetan Todorov, should base his re-evaluation of genre criticism precisely on a reversal of Croce's de-valuation of it: denying the existence of a clear distinction between literary and non-literary texts, Todorov maintains that:

the choice a society makes among all possible codifications of discourse determines what is called its *system of genres*.

The literary genres, indeed, are nothing but such choices among discursive possibilities, choices that a given society has made conventional. [...] But there is no reason to limit this notion of genre to literature alone; outside of literature the situation is no different.⁵

³ This is precisely the kind of approach to genre sought in the present study. Similar intentions are also expressed in D. Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, p. 19; and in Tim Youngs, *Travellers in Africa: British Travelogues, 1850-1900* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1994), p. 9 and pp. 209-11.

⁴ Corti, *Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, pp. 151-54.

⁵ Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, p. 10.

As a consequence, in Todorov's perspective, 'poetics will give way to the theory of discourse and to the analysis of its genres' (p. 12).⁶ Despite attempting to hold on to a notion of genres as classes of texts defined by codified norms, Todorov finds it necessary to point out their constructed nature and their historical specificity: 'genres' are 'only the classes of texts that have been historically perceived as such', and they can be described from two different points of view:

that of empirical observation and that of abstract analysis. In a given society, the recurrence of certain discursive properties is institutionalized, and individual texts are produced and perceived in relation to the norm constituted by that codification. A genre, whether literary or not, is nothing other than the codification of discursive properties.

It is because genres exist as an institution that they function as "horizons of expectation" for readers and as "models of writing" for authors. [...] On the one hand authors write in function (which does not mean in agreement with) the existing generic system, and they may bear witness to this just as well within the text as outside it, or even, in a way, in between the two — on the book cover [...] On the other hand, readers read in function of the generic system, with which they are familiar thanks to criticism, schools, the book distributions system, or simply by hearsay. (pp. 17-18)⁷

In similar fashion, Fredric Jameson, while declaring that genre criticism has been 'thoroughly discredited by modern literary theory and practice', points out 'the mediatory function of the notion of a genre, which allows the co-ordination of immanent formal

⁶ For a discourse analysis perspective on genre see also John M. Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic Research Settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Swales' perspectives are applied to translation by Carl James in 'Genre Analysis and the Translator', *Target*, 1.1 (1989), 29-41.

⁷ The complex relationship between genres and culture, and genres and literary systems is also highlighted by Maria Corti. After a discussion of the dynamic relationship between generic norms and the choices of individual authors, Corti adds: 'Il genere letterario è però anche *sintomo* di una cultura e dello *status* sociale che lo produce e accoglie e diffonde, donde l'importanza di inserire nella riflessione sui generi la nozione di competenza dei destinatari [...] La stessa questione dei rapporti letteratura-società [...] otterrà esiti più proficui se l'obiettivo dei critici sociologi sarà puntato non solo sui testi singoli, magari di grandi scrittori, ma sull'articolazione dei generi letterari, più legati per la stessa loro realtà e per la frequentazione che ne fanno gli autori minori, al contesto culturale e alle sue stratificazioni. [...] Il problema dei generi letterari [...] è quindi ambivalente: da un lato riguarda le variazioni funzionali all'interno del sistema letterario e in rapporto ad esso, su una strada di ricerca aperta da Sklovskij e Tynjanov; d'altro lato diviene un particolare problema di comunicazione letteraria, che investe emittenti e destinatari dando nuova luce alla storia della ricezione dei testi nei vari ambienti e momenti socioculturali' (*Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, pp. 154-56).

analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life'.⁸ For Jameson (as for Todorov) the relationship between writer and readers is central to the notion of genre: 'genres are essentially literary institutions, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artefact' (p. 106).⁹

Jameson's and Todorov's attention to the complex relationship between genre, reader interpretation and the modern system of cultural production and distribution (with its inherent ideologies) is particularly interesting in the case of an 'invisible' or 'disguised' genre such as contemporary Italian travel writing. In fact, even an inductive, historical approach to the study of genre such as the one suggested by Corti risks being inapplicable in this specific case. Corti proposes an inquiry 'condotto in concreto su un *corpus* abbastanza omogeneo di testi, quali sono quelli di un compatto genere letterario', and asserts that such an analysis will be able to arrive 'al rinvenimento delle invarianti che danno vita al codice, di contro alle varianti dei singoli testi, e delle regole di trasformazione dei codici stessi'.¹⁰ Yet in the absence of a 'more or less homogeneous' travel genre within the system of contemporary Italian literature, even establishing which works actually belong to the sample group becomes highly problematic, and so does ascertaining authorial stance or readers' expectations about (and uses of) the type of text in question, let alone studying the 'invariants' of an eventual generic codification, or the socio-historical functions and

⁸ F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 105.

⁹ According to Jameson, however, the relationship between reader and writer is not straightforward. Today, in particular, the uses of texts are mediated and manipulated by the inescapable penetration of the market system into the realm of cultural production and distribution, so that 'with the elimination of an institutionalized social status for the cultural producer and the opening of the work of art itself to commodification, the older generic specifications are transformed into a brand-name system against which any authentic artistic expression must necessarily struggle' (p. 107).

¹⁰ Corti, *Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, p. 157.

codes of representations embedded in them. Corti herself, however, indirectly suggests a possible alternative route for the analysis when she mentions 'il problema della trasformazione dei generi letterari o delle loro funzioni, fenomeno che si spiega solo inserendo una dimensione temporale e storica' (p. 153). Corti clarifies that the rules of transformation of a genre can be studied on both a spatial and a temporal level. Spatial transformation is not bound by the limits of national literary systems: the process of restoration of a genre, for instance, 'può avvenire col recupero di un genere vivo in altre epoche entro il sistema letterario di una stessa letteratura [...] o di un genere che fu vivo nel sistema letterario di un'altra letteratura' (p. 158).

If we are interested in determining not so much the literary status, boundaries and generic norms of travel writing, but rather its functions and its relationship with the socio-historical circumstances it comes to inhabit (including processes of distribution and reception), it may then be possible to investigate the nature and fortune of contemporary Italian travel writing avoiding the limitations imposed on the analysis by a strictly national perspective, and adopting, instead, a comparative methodology. This comparative approach will aim to reveal the processes of distribution and reception of the 'genre' in a different culture and a different literary system, ultimately illustrating how relevant texts function under different socio-historical circumstances. Observing what happens when contemporary Italian travel writing travels beyond the boundaries of national language, national audiences and national critical enterprises can make it possible to avoid the constraints of the Italian critical tradition and the image it has produced (or failed to produce) of the genre, while also revealing aspects of specific texts (or groups of texts) which would not be highlighted by an analysis of their production, reception and functions carried out from the perspective

of a single culture and literary system. In redirecting the study of genre from a 'national' to a 'trans-national' perspective, we are thus moving towards the theoretical positions and the practices of Comparative Literature and the related area of Translation Studies.¹¹

ii Genre, Reception and Translation

One of the objectives of current approaches to comparative research is to go beyond the comparison of individual authors or works, and to look at the dynamics of literary systems, both in terms of their poetics, conditions of production, and consumption/reception mechanisms. More precisely, the aim of such approaches is to look at the dynamics which operate within literary systems not in isolation, but as part of a system of systems (a culture) and at the same time as part of a wider network of exchanges among different complex systems (different cultures). Discussing the systemic nature of culture, Lotman and Uspenskij have pointed out the relevance of shifts of perspective which come into play when we observe the same phenomenon from the point of view of different cultures, in which a text may come to play different roles.¹² If, as illustrated above, genres are cultural phenomena, then such dynamism and transferability can also apply to (and reveal much

¹¹ On recent developments in Comparative Literature and its relationship with expanding areas of research such as Translation Studies and Cultural Studies see Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993); and André Lefevere, 'Introduction: Comparative Literature and Translation', *Comparative Literature*, 47 (1995), 1-10.

¹² In *The Semiotics of Russian Culture* they write: 'Culture is understood as a system that stands between man (as a social unit) and the reality surrounding him, that is, as a mechanism for processing and organizing the information which comes to him from the outside world. The information may be considered important and significant, or it may be ignored, within a given culture. On the other hand information which is considered not-relevant for the first culture may, in the language of another culture, be extremely important. In this way one and the same text may be differently read in the languages of different cultures. [...] These semiotic conflicts, dialogues, forays by particular texts into what is for them a completely alien semiotic milieu, these processes of transcoding, of the translation of texts from one system of language into another, of drawing equivalences between texts of mutually untranslatable languages, and so on, — all create a picture of exceptional dynamism' (pp. x-xii).

about) them — as long as we adopt a non-prescriptive, historicized and reception-oriented approach to their study. Precisely such a notion of genre is central to Hans Robert Jauss's work on what he has called the 'horizons of expectations' of different audiences — horizons which give rise to different readings of a text, all of which are justified and possible, and must be considered relevant to research independently of value judgements, whether aesthetic or otherwise.¹³

Horizontal changes, which are particularly relevant in the present context, can take place both on the historical and the geographical plane (along time and space co-ordinates); within any given cultural context the reading of a text is conditioned by the active horizon, but an innovative text can also 'result in a "change of horizons" through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness' (p. 25). In this perspective, then, genre is defined by Jauss in a dynamic, historicized fashion:

A corresponding process of the continuous establishing and altering of horizons also determines the relationship of the individual text to the succession of texts that forms the genre. The new text evokes for the reader (listener) the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, altered, or even just reproduced. Variation and correction determine the scope, whereas alteration and reproduction determine the borders of a genre-structure. (p. 23)¹⁴

¹³ In *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* Jauss writes that the 'coherence of literature as an event is primarily mediated in the horizon of expectations of the literary experience of contemporary and later readers, critics and authors' (p.22); thus, the concept of 'horizon of expectations' is central to Jauss's project of 'the grounding of the traditional aesthetics of production and representation in an aesthetic of reception and influence' (p.19).

¹⁴ The last sentence is later clarified by Jauss: 'Variation, extension and correction determine the latitude of a generic structure; a break with the convention on the one hand and mere reproduction on the other determine its boundaries' (p. 88).

This line of argument brings Jauss to a reception-oriented reformulation of the concept of genre, in which the cultural context plays a central role.¹⁵ While radically historicizing the notion of genre, such a conception is also perfectly compatible with possible genre mixing, or hybridization — having no particular interest in evaluating “pure” genres according to a fixed canon or repertoire, but rather treating them ‘as *groups* or *historical families*’ which ‘cannot be deduced or defined, but only historically determined, delimited and described’ (p. 80). Jauss’s approach is then also in keeping with Pratt’s suggestion (quoted in section i of the present chapter) that one should not aim to narrowly define or codify a genre such as travel writing, but rather to highlight its heterogeneity and its points of contact with other kinds of texts, while also undertaking a critique of its ideological implications.

In fact Jauss’s historical approach and the flexibility of his definition of genre go hand in hand: reception is the only real measure of genre, since we can always (re)read a text as belonging to a different group from the one it was first considered to be part of — and we do it all the time.¹⁶ A text may gesture to a genre, either to invite a reading that will place it within the particular horizon of expectations associated with that group at a specific point in place and time, or perhaps to claim a radically different (hybrid, parodic, ...) space for itself.¹⁷ Yet in either case the gesturing will not guarantee, but only encourage a specific

¹⁵ Jauss writes: ‘Just as there is no act of verbal communication that is not related to a general socially or situationally conditioned norm or convention, it is also unimaginable that a literary work set itself into an informational vacuum, without indicating a specific situation of understanding. To this extent, every work belongs to a genre — whereby I mean neither more nor less than that for each work a preconstituted horizon of expectations must be ready at hand [...] to orient the reader’s (public’s) understanding and to enable a qualifying reception’ (p. 79).

¹⁶ Todorov, for instance points out that ‘nothing prevents a story that recounts a real event from being perceived as literature. Nothing in its composition needs to be changed; we need only say that we are not interested in its truth value but are reading it “as” literature’ (*Genres in Discourse*, p. 3).

¹⁷ On the way in which explicit gesturing to genre can be exploited for different purposes see Maria Corti’s observations on the ‘recovery’ and ‘restoration’ of old models (*Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, p. 158). Susan Stewart, in *Crimes of Writing* remarks on the possible effects of explicit gesturing to a genre. Stewart talks of ‘distressed genres’, noting that “to distress” involves a process of appropriation by reproduction, a manipulation through affiliation’ (p. 68); as a consequence ‘distressed forms show us the gap

type of reading, while the dynamism of reception, both in synchronic and diachronic perspective, remains unthreatened. Horizons of expectations are clearly part of this constantly changing socio-cultural knowledge, which determines the process of negotiation between reader and text through which interpretation (including genre affiliation) is achieved.¹⁸

A dynamic conception of genre also highlights how moving a text across cultures and canons can determine shifts in the horizons of expectation evoked by it, including its genre affiliation; here Jauss takes his lead from Tynianov:

A work which is ripped out of the context of the given literary system and transposed into another one receives another coloring, clothes itself with other characteristics, enters into another genre, loses its genre; in other words, its function is shifted.¹⁹

between past and present as a structure of desire, a structure in which authority seeks legitimization by recontextualizing its object and thereby recontextualizing itself' (p. 74). Yet 'as soon as we hear the distressed genre, its high seriousness, its inflexible form, its reverent tone, and its venerable language, we also hear the works that undermine it' (p. 88); in gesturing to genre, parody is always just round the corner, and 'because of the shadow of parody, the gesture made in distressing genres is an ambivalent one: it implies defamation as well as veneration' (p. 89). Similar ambivalences are pointed out by Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi and Wlad Godzich (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) in an essay which outlines the mechanisms of censorship and appropriation undergone by 'popular culture' in order to be accepted as a suitable object for academic study: popular culture had to be subjugated before it could be turned into 'an "object" of science' (p. 120), and be subjected to a 'gaze which assumes the oppression of the very reality it objectifies and idealizes' (p. 121); only then the elites could 'develop a passion for the "popular"'; see pp. 119-36 (p. 121).

¹⁸ Umberto Eco, in *I limiti dell'interpretazione* (Milan: Bompiani, 1990), highlights this unavoidable complexity of the act of reading: 'Quando un testo viene messo in bottiglia [...] cioè quando un testo viene prodotto non per un singolo destinatario ma per una comunità di lettori, l'autore sa che esso verrà interpretato non secondo le sue intenzioni ma secondo una complessa strategia di interazioni che coinvolge anche i lettori, assieme alla loro competenza della lingua come patrimonio sociale. Per patrimonio sociale non intendo soltanto una data lingua come insieme di regole grammaticali, ma anche l'intera enciclopedia che si è costituita attraverso l'esercizio di quella lingua, cioè le convenzioni culturali che quella lingua ha prodotto e la storia delle interpretazioni precedenti di molti testi, compreso il testo che il lettore sta leggendo in quel momento. [...] Così, ogni atto di lettura è una transazione difficile fra la competenza del lettore (la conoscenza del mondo condivisa dal lettore) e il tipo di competenza che un dato testo postula per essere letto in maniera economica' (p. 110). On the subject see also U. Eco, *Lector in fabula* (Milan: Bompiani, 1991).

¹⁹ Juri Tynianov, 'Die Ode als oratorisches Genre', in *Texte der russischen Formalisten*, ed. by Wolf-Dieter Stempel, 2 vols (Munich: Kink, 1972), II, pp. 273-337; the passage is quote in Jauss, pp. 106-7.

This reception-oriented perspective on genre is closely linked with Translation Studies and with the attempt to understand and analyse translation as a form of transfer, manipulation, rewriting of texts capable of playing an essential part in communicating across cultures. Recent approaches to translation such as those proposed by Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, José Lambert, Theo Hermans and Lawrence Venuti,²⁰ agree, in all their difference, in treating translation as a phenomenon belonging to the complex system of culture(s) and in giving priority to a target-oriented approach which stresses the importance of studying the way in which a translation functions as part of the literary and cultural system into which it is introduced.²¹

²⁰ See in particular: Itamar Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, special issue of *Poetics Today*, 11.1 (Spring 1990); Gideon Toury, 'Translated Literature: System, Norm, Performance — Toward a TT-Oriented Approach to Literary Translation', *Poetics Today*, 2.4 (Summer/Autumn 1981), 9-27; André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*; José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp, 'Towards Research Programmes: The Function of Translated Literature Within European Literatures', in *Second Hand: Papers on the Theory and Historical Study of Literary Translation*, ed. by Theo Hermans, *ALW-Cahier*, 3 (1985), 183-97; Theo Hermans, 'Introduction: Translation Studies and a New Paradigm', in *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. by T. Hermans (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 7-15; L. Venuti, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. by L. Venuti; L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

²¹ It is interesting to note the affinity between Jauss's reception model, the observations on cultural transfer and manipulation emerging from Translation Studies, and the ideas of a cultural theorist like Bourdieu, with his characterization of the habitus as 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions', resulting in practices 'always tending to reproduce the objective structures of which they are the product' and 'determined by the past conditions which have produced the principle of their production' (*Outline of a Theory of Practice*, p. 72). On the other hand, drawing on Bourdieu, Bassnett and Lefevere have recently equated literary translation to the exchange of 'cultural capital': 'It is in the domain of cultural capital that translation can most clearly be seen to construct cultures. It does so by negotiating the passage of texts between them, or rather, by devising strategies through which texts from one culture can penetrate the textual and conceptual grids of another culture, and function in that other culture. What we call the "socialization process", of which formal education is a big, though not the only part, leaves us with textual and conceptual grids that regulate most of the writing and the thinking in the culture in which we grow up.' (Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, 'Introduction — Where are we in Translation Studies?', in S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures* (Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp. 1-11 (p. 7)). On the relationship between Translation Studies and culture see also A. Lefevere and S. Bassnett, 'Introduction — Proust's Grandmother and the Thousand and One Nights: The "Cultural Turn" in Translation Studies', in *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere (London and New York: Pinter, 1990), pp. 1-13; José Lambert, 'The Cultural Component Reconsidered', in *Translation Studies: An Interdiscipline*, ed. by Mary Snell-Hornby, Franz Pöchhacker, Klaus Kaindl (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1994), pp. 17-25; and Susan Bassnett, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', in Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures*, pp. 123-140.

The next step, then, is to look at genre in translation. If, as we have seen, shifts in reading take place when the horizon of expectations activated by a text changes, it is appropriate to ask what happens in the case of intercultural translations; what becomes of horizons of expectations (and of readings) when a text crosses the linguistic and cultural boundaries of the community which first received it; and, in the sense qualified above, what happens to its generic affiliation.²²

Analysing the relationship between the translated text and the reader, Theo Hermans has pointed out that 'translations normally address an audience which is not only linguistically but also temporally and/or geographically removed from that addressed by the source text'.²³ This 'displacement' complicates the relationship between the text and the reader, as it may threaten the shared frame of reference which makes interpretation possible. This kind of approach may help re-value translations as a kind of text which is 'irreducible [...] always leaves loose ends, is always hybrid, plural, and different' (p. 45). Yet, Hermans is perfectly aware of the need to go beyond the comparison of individual source and target texts and, discussing the role of norms and conventions in translation, he has recently pointed out that 'every translation constitutes the selection of a particular mode of representation from among a wider range of available, permissible modes'. Just like the selection of a text for translation, so 'the choice of a particular style highlights the exclusions going with it, and thus points up the existence of alternative possibilities, of

²² This series of questions invests not only the nature of texts but that of theory itself. In a chapter of *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1983) entitled 'Traveling Theory', Edward Said has pointed out the importance of the question 'of what happens to a theory when it moves from one place to another': 'Assume therefore that, as a result of specific historical circumstances, a theory or idea pertaining to those circumstances arises. What happens to it when, in different circumstances and for new reasons, it is used again and, in still more different circumstances, again? What can this tell us about theory itself — its limits, its possibilities, its inherent problems — and what can it suggest to us about the relationship between theory and criticism, on the one hand, and society and culture on the other?' (p. 230).

²³ Theo Hermans, 'The Translator's Voice in Translated Narrative', *Target*, 8.1 (1996), 23-48 (p. 28).

paths not chosen, as well as of certain stylistic and representational allegiances, similar choices made by other writers and translators'.²⁴ A suitable framework for such larger scale research is provided by the theory of the polysystem developed by Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury in the 1970s and in the work which has since derived, directly or indirectly, from it.²⁵ Polysystem theory is characterized by a descriptive (rather than prescriptive) approach, by a focus on the target culture and the function exercised in it by translations, and by the conception of literature as a 'polysystem', that is:

as a differentiated and dynamic 'conglomerate of systems', characterized by internal oppositions and continual shifts. Among the oppositions are those between 'primary' (or innovatory) and 'secondary' (or conservative) models and types, between the centre of the system and its periphery, between canonized and non-canonized strata, between more or less strongly codified forms, between the various genres, etc. The dynamic aspect results from the tensions and conflicts generated by these multiple oppositions, so that the polysystem as a whole, and its constituent systems and subsystems, are in a state of perpetual flux, forever unstable.²⁶

Translation occupies a variable but essential position within the literary (and cultural) polysystem: it may be a central or marginal phenomenon, and may act as an instrument of continuity or innovation, but it always represents an important location of exchange, an

²⁴ Theo Hermans, 'Translation and Normativity', *Current Issues in Language and Society*, 5.1/2 (1998), forthcoming. The importance of a research practice not exclusively limited to the comparison of individual couples of source and target texts is also stressed, for instance, in Lambert and van Gorp, 'Towards Research Programmes'; the two authors state that 'we can hardly go on talking simply about the analysis of "a translated text"'. Our object is translated literature, that is to say, translational norms, models, behaviour and systems', adding their conviction that 'the study of translated literature, if approached from such a broad, systemic angle, will contribute substantially to a more dynamic and functional approach to literature as such, for there is no doubt that the analysis of literary translations provides an important key to our understanding of literary interference and historical poetics at large' (p. 193). On the subject see also Ria Wanderauwera, *Dutch Novels Translated into English: The Transformation of a "Minority" Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1985), and George Paizis, 'Category Romances: Translation, Realism and Myth', *The Translator*, 4.1 (1998), 1-24; both studies deal with the issue of genre in translation and with questions of reception.

²⁵ For an *a posteriori* account of the development and influence of polysystem theory see José Lambert, 'Translation, Systems and Research: The Contribution of Polysystem Studies to Translation Studies', *TTR*, 8.1 (1995), 105-52.

²⁶ Hermans, 'Introduction: Translation Studies and a New Paradigm', p. 11.

interface with other cultures and literary systems.²⁷ Thanks to this systemic approach it is then possible to reconcile the micro and macro level of translation studies, and, in the words of José Lambert and Hendrik van Gorp, 'to make general descriptive statements on all levels of both the translated text and the literary system in which it is embedded'.²⁸

Working within such a framework, Itamar Even-Zohar proposed a series of hypotheses concerning the functions of translation within the literary polysystem. Even-Zohar's hypotheses are formulated in a language which implies a strongly hierarchical view of the literary polysystem and, consequently, of the function played by translation within it. Looking for regularities and correlations in the way in which texts are selected for translation and in the 'norms, behaviours and policies' adopted when translating them, Even-Zohar states that both types of strategy are strictly linked to the conditions of the target polysystem.²⁹ Translation may be a central element of the target literature, in which case it will behave as an innovatory force. This tends to happen, according to Even-Zohar, under three sets of circumstances: 'when a literature is "young", that is in the process of being established'; when it is 'either "peripheral" (within a large group of correlated literatures) or "weak"'; and when 'there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums' in it

²⁷ Hermans describes the functions of translation within the polysystem in the following terms: 'The theory of the polysystem sees literary translation as one element among many in the constant struggle for domination between the system's various layers and subdivisions. In a given literature, translations may at certain times constitute a separate subsystem, [...] or be more or less fully integrated into the indigenous system; they may form part of the system's prestigious centre or remain a peripheral phenomenon; they may be used as 'primary' polemical weapons to challenge the dominant poetics, or they may shore up and reinforce the prevailing conventions. From the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a degree of manipulation. In addition all translation represents a crucial instance of what happens at the interface between different linguistic, literary and cultural codes, and since notions of interface, functional transformation and code-switching are essential aspects of the polysystem theory, translation may provide clues for the study of other types of intra- and intersystemic transfer as well' ('Introduction: Translation Studies and a New Paradigm', pp. 11-12).

²⁸ Lambert and van Gorp, 'Towards Research Programmes', p. 191.

²⁹ Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, p. 46; for further developments of such a target oriented approach and its theoretical and methodological implications see Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995), especially pp. 23-39.

(p. 47). Under other conditions, translation would tend to remain peripheral within the target literary polysystem, and would act as 'a major factor of conservatism' (p. 48). In this case, according to the hypotheses, 'the translator's main effort is to concentrate upon finding the best ready-made secondary models for the foreign text' (p. 51).³⁰

Writing about the laws of interference which regulate the relationship between different cultural polysystems and in which translation plays a large part, Even-Zohar claimed that an 'appropriated repertoire does not necessarily maintain source literature function' (p. 70); and he went as far as concluding that 'the function of the [...] transferred items in the source system is irrelevant for the target system, as long as they are employable for target system functions. Thus transfers often involve functional shifts' (p. 49).³¹

Elaborating on this hypothesis, Gideon Toury recently added that

it is not as if, within one culture, interference of all 'foreign' languages, all textual traditions, all cultures is always equally tolerated (or rejected). What should be brought in as another conditioning factor is thus the *relative prestige* of cultures and languages (as seen from the vantage point of the prospective target system) and their *power relations* with the latter. The rule here seems to be that

tolerance of interference — and hence the endurance of its manifestations — tend to increase when translation is carried out from a 'major' or highly prestigious

³⁰ Starting from Even-Zohar's premises, Toury, in *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, has developed a series of 'laws of translation behaviour' which stress the role of target culture repertoires and the importance of relative status in determining translation norms and behaviour. Among the 'laws' proposed by Toury are the following: 'in translation, source-text textemes tend to be converted into target language (or target-culture) repertoremes' (p. 268); 'in translation, textual relations obtaining to the original are often modified, sometimes to the point of being totally ignored in favour of [more] habitual options offered by a target repertoire' (p. 268); 'the more peripheral [the status of translation in a particular (sub)culture], the more the translation will accommodate itself to established models and repertoires' (p. 268). According to Toury, descriptive research has demonstrated that this last law is 'only seldom broken, and even then only to a rather limited extent', confirming Even-Zohar's view that 'translation tends to assume a *peripheral* position in the target system, generally employing secondary models and serving as a major factor of conservatism' (pp. 271-72).

³¹ It is interesting to note that Even-Zohar, like Jauss, insists on the strictly historical nature of his principles and notions. It is also notable that Jauss and Even-Zohar share many of their references, especially those leading back to Russian formalism and in particular to Tynjanov, whom Even-Zohar calls 'the true father of the systemic approach' (p. 29).

language/culture, especially if the target language/culture is 'minor', or 'weak' in any other sense,

'majority' and 'minority', 'strength' and 'weakness' being relative rather than fixed, let alone inherent features of languages and cultures.³²

According to Even-Zohar, this hierarchical structure does not apply only to the position of translated literature as a whole within the literary polysystem, but is also influenced by the prestige of individual texts or genres:

As a system, translated literature is itself stratified, and from the point of view of polysystemic analysis it is often from the vantage point of the central stratum that all relations within the system are observed. This means that while one section of translated literature may assume central position, another may remain quite peripheral.³³

Yet 'interference often takes place via peripheries', and this explains why 'semiliterary texts, translated literature, children's literature [...] are indispensable objects of study for an adequate understanding of how and why transfers occur, within systems as well as among them'.³⁴

Following the suggestions of polysystem theory, it is possible to ask in what way the position of a genre within the source system is modified once translation transposes (some of) its texts to a different polysystem, which is characterized by a different stratification,

³² Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, p. 278.

³³ Even-Zohar, p. 49. Similarly, within the literary polysystem at large, Even-Zohar (following Tynjanov and Shklovskij) sees a constant struggle among different strata. The dynamism of the polysystem is guaranteed by the presence of centripetal and centrifugal forces, whereby a specific stratum can move from the periphery to the center or vice versa. Canonized literature — often identified as the only component of the literary system — is part of the strata which occupy a central position in the polysystem at a given time. 'Canonicity is thus no inherent feature of textual activities on any level' and 'by "canonized" one means those literary norms and works [...] which are accepted as legitimate by the dominant circles within a culture' (pp. 14-15). This means that canonicity and centrality within the polysystem generally coincide at any given moment.

³⁴ Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, p. 25. Even-Zohar also mentions the issue of 'visibility' when discussing interference, noting that 'the channels of actual transfer may be on the periphery, and hence not "visible" (from the point of view of official culture)' (p. 59).

and where the genre in question occupies a different position. We may ask how the relative prestige of the source and the target culture, and of the genre under examination within each one of them, influences selection and translation strategies. And we may also explore the way in which different combinations of marginality and centrality affect the dynamics between source and target text.

The role of peripheries and marginal texts has been particularly stressed by scholars of translation who have begun to criticize the strictly hierarchical view of the literary polysystem proposed by Even-Zohar and Toury.³⁵ Edwin Gentzler has remarked that while much empirical research seems to confirm Even-Zohar's hypotheses on the strong innovative role played by translation in 'weak' cultures, no such evidence has been found of the supposedly less important and predominantly conservative function of translation practices in 'strong' cultures, concluding that 'perhaps we need to rethink the vocabulary of "weak" and "strong" cultures altogether'.³⁶ Gentzler suggests that, far from being a conservative force, translation may represent the location of counter-cultures which play an essential role in subverting old forms and creating new ones, even in hegemonic cultures such as that of the USA.³⁷

³⁵ Recognizing the seminal nature of polysystem theory for current approaches to translation studies, Susan Bassnett, for instance, has pointed out that Even-Zohar's description of the conditions under which translation becomes a major innovative force now strikes us as 'somewhat crude', while his use of terms such as 'weak' and 'strong' with reference to whole literatures is at least ambiguous and can be misleading; S. Bassnett, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', p. 127. On this subject see also J. Lambert, 'Translation, Systems and Research', pp. 113-17.

³⁶ E. Gentzler, 'Translation, Counter-Culture, and *The Fifties* in the USA', in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, ed. by Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal (Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1996), pp. 116-37 (pp. 118-20).

³⁷ It is interesting to note that various Northern American scholars have recently proposed alternative images of translation in which marginality may become a powerful instrument of change, rather than the locus of conservation. See for instance the notion of 'abusive fidelity' in Philip E. Lewis, 'The Measure of Translation Effects', in *Difference in Translation*, ed. by Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 31-62 (p. 41); or Barbara Godard's suggestion of 'womanhandling' the text in 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation', in *Translation, History and Culture*, ed. by S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, pp. 87-96 (p. 94).

Also moving from polysystemic positions towards a more complex and less hierarchical view of cultural phenomena, André Lefevere analysed the way in which translation, like other forms of rewriting, is regulated by the cultural system in which it takes place; this system, whose main elements are patronage and poetics, is tendentially conservative and 'acts as a series of "constraints", [...], on the reader, writer and rewriter'.³⁸

A translator's attitude (and, consequently, his/her translation strategies) will be:

heavily influenced by the status of the original, the self image of the culture that text is translated into, the types of texts deemed acceptable in that culture, the levels of diction deemed acceptable in it, the intended audience, and the "cultural scripts" that audience is used to or willing to accept. (p. 87)³⁹

We can then legitimately ask in what way poetics and patronage influence the production of a translation, and its subsequent reception, always keeping in mind that, while constrained by the system, translation is also a powerful manipulating instrument, capable of creating new or revised images (new or revised horizons of expectations). In the work of Lawrence Venuti, translation is seen as a key element in shaping both representations of the source culture and identity positions within the target culture. Venuti's approach, though not deriving directly from polysystem theory, shares with it a focus on the target culture and the functions exercised by translation within it. On this basis he distinguishes a domesticating

³⁸ Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 12-13.

³⁹ The hierarchical nature of reception and consumption processes, still implicit in Lefevere's statement, is also highlighted by Bourdieu in *Distinction*, with a specific reference to genres: 'To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. [...] The manner in which culture has been acquired lives on in the manner of using it' (pp. 1-2). In a more recent essay, which draws explicitly on Bourdieu, Lefevere stated that the 'distribution and regulation of cultural capital by means of translation' depends on at least three factors: '(i) the need, or rather needs, of the audience, or rather audiences [...], (ii) the patron or initiator of the translation, and (iii) the relative prestige of the source and target cultures and their languages'; 'Translation Practice(s) and the Circulation of Cultural Capital: Some Aeneids in English', in Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures*, pp. 41-56 (p. 44).

or familiarizing approach to translation, and a defamiliarizing or foreignizing one. The first tends to select texts which can be easily incorporated in the dominant ideology of the target culture, and to translate them according to fluent strategies, aiming to produce a 'transparent' text, which does not declare its translated nature and conceals the presence of the translator and his or her work. Foreignizing strategies, on the other hand, tend to highlight the fact that a text is a translation, and to maintain some of its Otherness while making it intelligible to the target audience. According to Venuti, hegemonic cultures (such as contemporary Anglo-American culture) tend to translate according to domesticating models, imposing upon the source text 'target-language values, beliefs and social representations', performing 'a labor of acculturation', and 'enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture'.⁴⁰ Yet, given that the system is not simply deterministic, there should also be a space for the translator to make alternative choices, for the innovative and 'resistant' practices of foreignizing translation which Venuti proposes as an antidote to the dominant discourse of fluency and invisibility.⁴¹

Following the kind of reasoning illustrated by Levefere and Venuti, we can finally ask how, in the case of a specific text or group of texts and their genre affiliation, translation strategies adopted at the level of genre and discourse act towards the reinforcement of existing 'horizons of expectations' or oppose them, and to what effect.⁴²

⁴⁰ Venuti, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Translation*, p. 5; see also L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, and L. Venuti, 'Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities', in *Cultural Functions of Translation*, ed. by Christina Schäffner and Helen Kelly-Holmes (Clevedon and Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1995), pp. 9-25.

⁴¹ See Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*.

⁴² Working within this type of methodological framework, George Paizis has analysed the translation of popular romantic fiction and concluded that 'models or rules do not apply cross-culturally' ('Category Romances', p. 19). According to Paizis this is due to two separate sets of problems: 'One [...] centres around the area of inherited models — social, cultural or linguistic — that operate as barriers, forces of attraction or

And we can try to relate any regularities noticed among translations not only to the hierarchical relationships among literary (poly)systems and their subsystems, but also to the relevant mechanisms of cultural production and consumption, to the socio-historical setting in which translation takes place, to the hegemonic ideologies which characterize the target culture, and to the dominant systems of representation operating at the time and in the place in question.

iii Travel Writing in English: Outline of a Hybrid Genre

The research questions and methodology highlighted in the previous section are particularly significant when applied to a marginal, or 'disguised' genre such as contemporary Italian travel writing, whose visibility within the Italian literary (poly)system is extremely limited, but whose marginality, as we have seen, does not exclude that it might play a significant role both at intra- and intersystemic level. The use of a comparative approach which takes into account the transfer of a (group of) text(s) from one culture and one literary system to another, while not aiming to locate a strict genre definition with which to delimit the characters and boundaries of the genre, can highlight how generic affiliation is dependent on the circumstances of reception and ought to be considered in a relativized and historicized perspective.

In order to adopt such a comparative approach, however, we need to know more about the position of travel writing within a different literary (and cultural) polysystem

repulsion which constrain, pull or push the text that is in the process of translation. The other group of problems relates more to signification: *how* to convey something when the reader's experience is lacunary' (p. 19). Similar questions are also asked, in a post-colonial perspective, by Richard Jacquemond in 'Translation and Cultural Hegemony: The Case of French Arabic Translation', in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. by L. Venuti, pp. 139-58.

which has relations of contact and interference with the Italian one, about the repertoire of this second polysystem, and about the horizons of expectation associated with it. A brief outline of the genre and its reception in such a system can then serve as a background against which to observe what happens to Italian texts which can be assimilated to the genre in translation.

'Interference' via translation is traditionally present between Italian and British literature, from the Renaissance onwards. Quantitative data show that, at least since the second half of the eighteenth century, translations from English into Italian greatly outnumber translations from Italian into English,⁴³ suggesting that, in the terminology of Even-Zohar, the Italian literary (poly)system could be viewed as 'weak', and the British as 'strong'.⁴⁴ This relative position also appears to be confirmed at the level of the specific genre under examination by the observations made in Chapter 1 about the popularity of travel writing translated from English in today's Italian book market. Travel writing in English and its reception in the British literary (poly)system can then function as a suitable term of comparison for the type of analysis outlined in the preceding section.⁴⁵

⁴³ On the distribution of translation of foreign literature across Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth century see Franco Moretti, *Atlante del romanzo europeo. 1800-1900*, pp. 145-202. On recent trends see L. Venuti, 'Introduction', in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. by L. Venuti, pp. 5-6 and p. 15; L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 12-17. A survey of recent translations of Italian fiction into English can be found in R. Keenoy and F. Conte, *The Babel Guide to Italian Fiction*. Finally, on American translations from Italian see *The Italian Book in America/Il libro Italiano in America*, ed. by Ornella Munafò, trans. by Kristin Jarratt (New York: The Translation Centre, 1986).

⁴⁴ As already noted, the applicability and exact meaning of this terminology is currently the object of a lively debate within Translation Studies. On the subject see notes 35 and 37 above.

⁴⁵ Although the outline traced in the next few pages concentrates on British travel writing and its reception, texts published in the USA will also be mentioned. This is due to the extreme permeability of the relevant literary systems (if not of the cultures), often referred to as 'the Anglo-American' system. Secondary as well as primary works on travel, for instance, are usually published in both countries, and the critical discourse on travel writing shares many of the same features (and references) on both sides of the Atlantic. In the terminology of polysystem theory, this Anglo-American system can be defined as a 'mega-polysystem'. Even-Zohar defines as 'mega-polysystem' 'one which organizes and controls several communities' (*Polysystem Studies*, p. 24). On the concept of hierarchical relationships within 'megasystems' and their effect on marginal cultures see Maria Tymoczko, 'The Metonymics of Translating Marginalized Texts', *Comparative Literature*, 47 (1995), 11-24.

It has already been pointed out in Chapter 1 that travel writing enjoys a more established position within British culture and literature than it does in Italy. For at least three centuries travel writing has been one of the most prolific areas of British (and later American) literature, and its popularity is currently on the increase.⁴⁶ English-language travel writing, while remaining far from being a core canonic genre, enjoys a well established position and a large public.⁴⁷ Writing at the beginning of the 1990s, Michael Kowalewski noted that during the previous decade there had been 'a resurgence of interest in travel writing unequalled since the twenties and thirties' and 'a remarkable number of new travel writers and otherwise established authors [were trying] their hand at the genre, both commanding sizeable popular audiences'.⁴⁸ Remarks of this kind are apparently in contrast with the opinion of critics such as Paul Fussell, according to whom British travel writing declined after the trauma of the Second World War and the spread of world-wide mass tourism.⁴⁹ Yet the two positions are only apparently irreconcilable, given what Mark Cocker has called 'the travel book's longevity and its recurrent popularity' among the genres of British literature: notwithstanding the periodic highs and lows of the genre, Manfred Pfister, for instance, has been able to assert that 'English literature is particularly

⁴⁶ See Warner G. Rice, 'Introduction: Travellers and Travel Books', in *Literature as a Mode of Travel*, ed. by W. G. Rice, pp. 7-9 (p. 7); P. G. Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, pp. ix-x and 74-75; Dorothy Carrington, *The Traveller's Eye* (London: The Pilot Press, 1947), p. 1-2; C. L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, pp. x-xi and pp. 1-3; J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, p. 7 and pp. 11-12.

⁴⁷ Discussing the canonic genres of English literature Alastair Fowler notes: 'According to the central conception, "literature" refers to a certain group of genres, whose exemplars are therefore by definition literary, at least in aspiration. These central genres comprise the poetic kinds, the dramatic, and some of the prose kinds. The canon has varied a good deal, but has always included satire, for example, and fictional narrative. Round this nucleus spreads a looser plasma of neighboring forms: essay, biography, dialogue, history, and others' (*Kinds of Literature*, p. 5). Travel writing is later assimilated to the second group of genres when Fowler states that 'ambiguity of literary status is confined to a few genres, for the most part — especially letters and travel books, and nontechnical essays, biographies, and philosophical and scientific treatises' (p. 11).

⁴⁸ M. Kowalewski, 'Introduction', in *Temperamental Journeys*, ed. by M. Kowalewski, p. 1. The same kind of observation had already been made in 1984 by the British travel writer Colin Thubron, who delivered to the Royal Society of Literature a paper on 'Travel Writing Today: Its Rise and Its Dilemma', opening it with remarks on the sudden popularity of the genre among the British public (p. 168).

rich in travel writing, and travel writing plays a more important role in it than in any other European literature'.⁵⁰

Even the contention that travel writing is a genre usually forgotten by critics is not easy to sustain within an Anglo-American perspective: it is interesting to note that remarks to this effect have been periodically used to introduce studies which claim to be the first to fill the critical gap in question.⁵¹ In the end, such claims have to be read as a sort of *captatio benevolentiae*, a rhetorical device rather than a statement of fact. In fact, such a long line of self-appointed 'first attempts' at analysing English-language travel writing actually demonstrates that this kind of literature has long been the subject of critical attention, though it may not be recognized as a central canonic genre.

Furthermore, scholars who choose to stress the relative lack of travel writing criticism, do so in order to highlight those distinctive features of the genre which make it the ideal object of contemporary critical approaches. Michael Kowalewski (writing from a predominantly American perspective), claims that 'criticism of modern [...] travel writing has been scant [...]. There has been very little critical effort to incorporate this burgeoning body of work into the literary canon or even to investigate why it resists incorporation.'⁵² This resistance is at least partly explained by Kowalewski as a result of the 'dauntingly heterogeneous character' of the genre:

⁴⁹ This is one of the main theses sustained by Fussell in *Abroad*.

⁵⁰ Pfister, 'Editorial', p. 6.

⁵¹ Such volumes include Dorothy Carrington's *The Traveller's Eye* (1947), or the collected volume *Literature as a Mode of Travel* (1963), and go all the way to *The Art of Travel: Essays on Travel Writing*, ed. by Philip Dodd (London: Frank Cass, 1982), P. G. Adams's *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (1983), and *Temperamental Journeys*, ed. by Michael Kowalewski (1992). See claims made by Carrington (p. 3), Dodd (p. vii), Adams (p. x), Kowalewski (p. 7 and p. 15).

⁵² Kowalewski, 'Introduction', p. 1.

Travel writing involves border crossings both literal and figurative. The first-person nonfictional narratives that form the heart of the genre usually display what Bill Buford terms a 'generic androgyny', which is not easily categorised. Travel writing borrows freely from the memoir, journalism, letters, guidebooks, confessional narrative and, most important, fiction. (p. 7)

'Textual hybridization' is also pointed out by Dennis Porter as a constitutive element of travel writing,⁵³ and Paul Fussell describes *travel books* as a "double barrel" genre, commenting that 'perhaps it is when we cannot satisfactorily designate a kind of work with a single word [...] but we must invoke two [...] that we sense we're entering complicated territory'.⁵⁴ Discussing Fussell's approach, Mark Cocker concludes that 'it narrows the field of enquiry, but it cannot solve all travel writing's taxonomic problems'.⁵⁵ Cocker cites the works of Gavin Maxwell and Geoffrey Moorhouse as examples of texts which seem to escape any existing definition of travel writing, and yet are perceived as travel books by the public. Even the most intuitive definitions of the genre are called into question by what Cocker calls 'the heterogeneous nature of Maxwell's four foreign works'. In fact, 'that the work should describe a journey, or at least travels of some kind, might perhaps seem the most obvious starting point'; yet 'if this were so, then one would immediately have to disqualify three, possibly all four of Maxwell's foreign books' (p. 104). As for Moorhouse, his *Calcutta* apparently defies all generic rules:

This is a detailed study of India's old capital in West Bengal. At no point in the text is Moorhouse explicitly present as its first person narrator. On this basis it would be difficult to think of it as a memoir; but neither could the book be considered simply as a

⁵³ Porter (*Haunted Journeys*, p. 3) speaks of 'the heterogeneous corpus of works I am calling European travel writing'; see also p. 19, and pp. 88-89. Elsewhere, Porter describes Marco Polo's *Milione* and T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* as typical examples of such heterogeneity; see D. Porter, 'Orientalism and Its Problems', in *The Politics of Theory*, ed. by Francis Baker, and others (Colchester: University of Exeter, 1983), pp. 179-93 (p. 182 and p. 186 in particular).

⁵⁴ *Abroad*, p. 202.

⁵⁵ M. Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 105.

work of academic geography or sociology. [...] It is, in addition, a work of non-fiction, full of distant and unfamiliar data, it exploits some of the devices of fiction, and, amongst other elements, supplies its readers with the exotic or comic anomalies, wonders and scandals which their own time and place might not. Moreover, the traveller's customary first hand experiences of landscape and people are evident throughout the book. Yet the author describes much of the contemporary city environment as if seen through the eyes of an anonymous visitor. This narrative device achieves an immediate and personal portrait, as in a travel work, yet simultaneously it serves to safeguard the book from the limitations that might attach were it presented as just one man's private view. (p. 106)

Notwithstanding its composite nature, Cocker notes, 'in the bookshop, [Moorhouse's book] is nearly always found in the travel section' (p. 106). In fact, it could be argued that it is precisely for its ability to at once awaken and baffle the expectations of its readers that *Calcutta* is a good example of contemporary travel writing. And Cocker's description of the book can be perceived as at once an excellent inventory of those same expectations (ranging from the autobiographical character of the travel account to its factual nature and its exotic quality) and a defence of their unstable, dynamic relationship with the travel text and its production.

Travel writers themselves agree in recognizing heterogeneity as an important character of the genre. For Colin Thubron 'the bewildering synthesis of history, people, landscape, accidents, smells, chance conversations' is what 'gives the travel book its peculiar distinction';⁵⁶ while Jonathan Raban draws an even longer inventory of miscellaneous components:

As a literary form, travel writing is a notoriously raffish open house [...] It accommodates the private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the rough note and polished table talk with indiscriminate hospitality. It freely mixes narrative and discursive writing. Much of its "factual" material, in the way of bills, menus, ticket-

⁵⁶ C. Thubron, 'Travel Writing Today', p. 181.

stubs, names and addresses, dates and destinations, is there to authenticate what is really fiction; while its wildest fictions have the status of possible facts.⁵⁷

It is precisely this heterogeneity which makes it hard to give a clear-cut definition of travel writing (even within the limited perspective of the Anglo-American literary system), as demonstrated by the attempts at genre criticism made by scholars such as Fussell and Cocker, as well as various others. Peter Bishop goes as far as to compare travel writing to 'the art of collage', and lists 'newspaper clippings, public notices, letters, official documents, diary extracts, essays on current affairs, on art, on architecture, comic dialogues and homilies' as components of a genre which is to be considered 'something of a complex hybrid', and 'has been connected with autobiographies, eye-witness accounts and travelogues. It has been called a sub-species of memoir, a form of romance (quest, picaresque or pastoral), a vehicle for essays (ethical or scientific) or a variant of the comic novel'.⁵⁸ And while it is true that 'the internal coherence of these assorted collages of essays, sermons, and so on, relies extensively on the image of geography and landscape', Bishop also warns against a reading which might attempt to simplify the mixture of factual and fictional elements typical of travel writing, pointing out that 'the gross physicality, the geographical locability, of travel books should not blind us to their fictional nature', since travel writing 'is not concerned only with the discovery of places, but also with their creation' (p. 3).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ J. Raban, 'The Journey and the Book', in *For Love and Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling 1969-1987* (London: Collins Harvill, 1987), pp. 253-60; quoted in Kowalewski, 'Introduction', p. 8.

⁵⁸ P. Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La* (London: The Athlone Press, 1989), p. 3.

⁵⁹ On the issue of fiction in travel writing see also Percy G. Adams, *Travelers and Travel Liars, 1660-1800* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962); C. L. Batten, *Pleasurable Instruction*, especially pp. 19-24; Susan Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, pp. 31-65.

Various critics have attempted to provide inventories of tropes and conventions which have characterized British travel writing and its development as a genre, at least from the Renaissance onwards.⁶⁰ While all attempts to transform such inventories into prescriptive genre definitions tend to fail when confronted with the heterogeneity of the material produced, distributed and read as 'travel writing', they may usefully be drawn upon to describe the particular expectations which influenced the reception of travel texts in a specific place and moment in time, as well as the rise and fall in popularity of specific kinds (or subgenres) of travel writing.

Thus Mary Baines Campbell draws what she calls a '*prehistory*' of the genre, starting from the earliest known narratives of Christian pilgrims, with their still tentative and problematic staging of the traveller's (and writer's) self, and ending with 'Sir Walter Raleigh's account of his search for El Dorado', a work which is 'characteristic of travel literature as we know it today: fully narrative, fully inhabited by its narrator, self-conscious about the problem of presenting difference in terms that neither inadvertently domesticate nor entirely alienate'.⁶¹ Campbell also underlines the hybrid nature of travel writing, pointing out that 'this is a genre composed of other genres, as well as one that importantly contributed to the genesis of the modern novel and the renaissance of autobiography' (and elsewhere she also draws links with letter writing, sacred histories, 'wonder books' and various other genres).⁶² Travel writing:

confronts, at their extreme limit, representational tasks proper to a number of literary kinds: the translation of experience into narrative and description, of the strange into the

⁶⁰ See for instance Batten, pp. 31-2; Fussell, *Abroad*, pp. 202-3; Adams, *Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel*, p. ix and pp. 35-7; Cocker, pp. 104-6; Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, p. 3

⁶¹ Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, pp. 5-6.

⁶² The quotation is from p. 6; see also p. 8, pp. 17-20, and pp. 47-57.

visible, of observation into the verbal construct of fact; the deployment of personal voice in the service of transmitting the information (or of creating devotional texts); the manipulation of rhetorical figures for ends other than ornament. (p. 6)

Campbell's account of travel writing suggests many possible lines of exploration, most of which have been taken up by recent criticism. Percy G. Adams, for instance, has analysed in detail the relationship between narrative and informational content in travel writing, and Charles L. Batten has studied the transformation of travel texts into vehicles of 'pleasurable instruction' in the eighteenth century. The strain between the need to inform the reader and the fascination exercised on writers as well as audiences by the exotic and even fantastic potential of travel writing is also underlined by Mark Cocker, with respect to contemporary texts. And both Cocker and Peter Bishop discuss the tension between factual prose and adventure narrative in the works of nineteenth- and twentieth-century travellers.

Campbell herself, however, is particularly interested in the evolution of the narrative representation of the self and of what she calls 'the inward feeling' of the traveller: the development of a subject position and a voice which transforms him (or, less frequently, her) into a fully developed character, a protagonist with whom the reader is invited to identify. The same line of enquiry brings other critics to follow the evolution of the narrativization of the traveller's subjectivity and voice from the point where Campbell left it, in the seventeenth century, to our day. Susan Stewart, for instance, notes that 'between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century the paradigm of travel writing shifted from supposedly "disinterested" observation to biographical narrative', determining conspicuous renegotiations 'in the tension [...] between description and narration'.⁶³ John Pemble traces the development of this move from the objective to the subjective mode in Victorian and

⁶³ Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, p. 177 and p. 180.

Edwardian times, focusing on 'the contributions of notable writers who gave the travel book a new function as literary portmanteau, with elements of autobiography, disquisition and essay', and noting that the travel book 'was less a mirror than a window': 'it was a personal testament, describing an inward as well as an outward journey, and serving as a vehicle for random fragments of description, opinion, and erudition.'⁶⁴ Mark Cocker describes a further shift towards subjectivity at the beginning of the twentieth century, when the focus moved from 'the novelty of the data', to 'the manner of its presentation', so that the chronological order of the travel account, and even, in some cases, its factual nature, were called into question.⁶⁵ Cocker sees the centrality of the autobiographical 'I' in travel writing as a sign of the 'vehement individualism' of the genre (p. 4), and describes contemporary travel books as internal journeys, 'expressing, in terms of landscape and foreign communities, the interior lives of the travellers' and narrating 'discoveries of self through the experiences of place' (p. 253). The role of 'formats' such as the letter and the diary is, according to Cocker, precisely to 'suggest freedom from the discipline of more formal writings' and 'create the illusion of intimacy, of direct access to the writer's most private and unguarded disclosures' (p. 196).

The gradual move from the predominance of factual information to that of individual experience is also confirmed by Colin Thubron, who, however, locates the decisive moment for this shift nearer to our days. Though 'the whole history of travel writing [...] is not simply an account of objective voyage and description', but rather 'of an

⁶⁴ J. Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁵ Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, pp. 7-8. In *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988; first edn London: Methuen, 1982), Walter Ong describes the classic structure of the travelogue and the picaresque novel, with their 'itinerant hero, whose travels served to string episodes together' as a 'persistent ghost' of old forms of oral narration, which depended on linear, episodic organization (pp. 148-49).

endless tension between the temperament and character of generations of writers and that of the worlds they travel through', Thubron maintains that in most Victorian travel books value was placed primarily on factual information, and writers showed 'a consciousness that they [were] bringing back empirical information which [would] be of use or interest to people at home'.⁶⁶ By the middle of the twentieth century however 'something has profoundly changed — and we are in the contemporary dilemma': 'the old sense of wonder has been deeply and forever diminished', the traveller 'must be conscious that almost always he has been preceded in his path by a host of others', and his account 'has been robbed of its old, empirical usefulness, and must look to other ways of excellence' (p. 173). As a consequence, the travel writer 'has become more subjective, more turned in on himself' (p. 176). Individuality is so important that today, 'most likely, the writer goes alone, as if to give primacy to his intensely personal view', yet at the same time 'these travellers share their humanity with you', needing to elicit from the readers a sympathetic response, to stimulate their identification with the writer's outer and inner journey, so that in the end 'the reader sees not through his own eyes, but through those of another, with another's tastes, fears, knowledge, aesthetics' (p. 176-78).

Part of the difficulty faced by contemporary travellers (and by travel writers in particular) stems from the increasing encroachment of the space of tourism upon the space of travel and, subsequently, from the need to distinguish themselves from the mass of the 'tourists'.⁶⁷ The advent of mass tourism is one of the main factors which bring Paul Fussell

⁶⁶ C. Thubron, 'Travel Writing Today', pp. 168-70.

⁶⁷ Thubron writes: 'The tourist world itself has become hugely extended. By the 1950s, there were already three million British travelling abroad every year, and tourism itself was homogenising the countries it invaded. Western culture, indeed, has half-conquered the world, but the travelling Westerner, as likely as not, feels alienated from it. It is probably precisely what he's travelling to escape' (p. 174).

to claim that 'travel is hardly possible anymore'.⁶⁸ Alternatively, however, tourism and its literature could be conceived as only one more form of hybridity to be included in the range of experience encompassed by travel and its textual representation. As James Buzard recently demonstrated, the logics of tourism and travel are thoroughly and inevitably intertwined, and any attempt to qualify 'real travel' as a form of anti-tourism is only bound to reveal the fallacy which undermines this apparent dichotomy.⁶⁹ Similarly, distinctions between the literature of travel and that of tourism are notoriously problematic, and thus the issue of the relationship between tourism and travel writing reopens the question of the slippery boundaries of the genre and of its inherent, irreducible hybridity.⁷⁰

Yet precisely that same hybridity which defies taxonomic and boundary-building efforts is at the centre of the undeniable growth of critical attention which, in the last twenty years, has resulted in a real proliferation of English language studies on travel texts. Thus Kowalewski points out that 'the hybrid, "androgynous" qualities of travel writing which place it in an unusual critical position are precisely those which deserve to be studied',⁷¹ and both Pfister and Porter note the connection between new critical approaches and the

⁶⁸ *Abroad*, p. 37.

⁶⁹ See J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to Culture, 1800-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993). See also Fussell's attempt to distinguish between explorers, travellers and tourists in *Abroad* (pp. 37-50), and Cocker's discussion of the impact of 'the Coca-Cola age' on travel writing (*Loneliness and Time*, pp. 243-60). On tourism itself, and its relationship with travel, see Roland Barthes, 'The Blue Guide', in *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), pp. 74-77; Jonathan Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', in *Framing the Sign: Criticism and its Institutions* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), pp. 153-67; Jost Krippendorf, *The Holiday Makers: Understanding the Impact of Leisure and Travel* (Oxford: Heinemann Professional Publishing, 1987); Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Society* (London: Sage Publications, 1990). Interesting case studies on travel, tourism and travel writing can be found in *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical analysis*, ed. by Barbara O'Connor and Michael Cronin (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993); while the boundaries between tourism, ethnography and critical practice are explored in Mireille Rosello, 'The Critic as Tourist: Hottentot Venuses and Comparatist Glands', *Paragraph*, special issue on *Practices of Hybridity*, ed. by Mireille Rosello, 18.1 (1995), 75-89.

⁷⁰ On this subject see for instance Pfister, *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 11.

⁷¹ 'Introduction', p. 8.

increasing prestige of the genre. Pfister concentrates on the attraction exercised by 'hybrid' and 'marginal' texts on poststructuralist critics,⁷² while Dennis Porter also recognizes the role of poststructuralism in breaking down the habit of fetishizing some kinds of writing at the expenses of others, and points to the work of Michel Foucault, in particular, as instrumental in determining his own interest in "ignoble genres", or works that [...] were once considered marginal to the activities of the literary critic, if not of historical scholarship'.⁷³ Porter's main inspiration, however, comes from Foucault only through the mediation of a different brand of criticism, which has recently brought substantial advancements in the study of travel: Porter's work is in fact to a great extent a response to Edward Said's book *Orientalism* and to subsequent post-colonial accounts of travel writing as a privileged location for the representation of the Other.⁷⁴ Said remarked that 'from travelers' tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured',⁷⁵ and, following his lead, many scholars have set out to illustrate the links between travel and empire.⁷⁶ Yet the connection between travel literature and colonialism is complex and cannot be reduced to a

⁷² Pfister points out that travel writing 'has attracted the attention of — mainly — poststructuralist critics, who appreciate and explore its marginal status at the border of literature proper, its generic impurity or hybridity (between fact and fiction, autobiography and topography, narration and exposition) and its cultural in-betweenness, its role as a medium for the construction and projection of self-images and images of the other. More so than the novel, [...] travel writing has proved crucial for shaping a culture's auto- and heterostereotypes, its definition of identity on terms of difference, and has, therefore, become a much-frequented field of Cultural Studies' ('Editorial', p. 6).

⁷³ *Haunted Journeys*, p. 19. On the refutation of a clear-cut distinction between literary and non literary texts in the area of travel writing see also Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London and New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 9.

⁷⁴ See Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, pp. 3-5; on the subject see also Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and Its Problems'.

⁷⁵ *Orientalism*, p. 117.

⁷⁶ Studies which fall into this category include Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire, and the Cultures of Travel* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996); Syed Manzurul Islam, *The Ethics of Travel: From Marco Polo to Kafka* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University

simple relationship of instrumentality. And it is, once again, the heterogeneous nature of travel writing which excludes any deterministic interpretation of its functions and ideologies.⁷⁷

It is still in the context of post-colonial criticism that the connection between travel writing and journalism has been pointed out by David Spurr. In his attempt to study the way in which colonial discourses were (and are) expressed in nonfiction writing, Spurr found his sample texts in 'literary and popular journalism and in related genres such as exploration narratives, travel writing, and the memoirs of colonial officials', all of which, according to him, allow for an examination of the colonial discourse 'in a form unmediated by the consciously aesthetic requirements of imaginative literature'.⁷⁸ Despite his attempts to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction (on the grounds of 'the conventional expectation of [the latter's] grounding in an historical actuality', and the fact that 'its relation to this actuality is understood to be primarily metonymic and historically referential rather than metaphoric and self-referential'), Spurr admits that the distinction is not clear-cut as 'journalism and other forms of nonfiction, despite conventional expectation, depend on the use of myth, symbol, metaphor, and other rhetorical procedures more often associated with fiction and poetry' (pp. 2-3).⁷⁹ Literary journalism thus joins other 'nonfiction' genres in

Press, 1996); P. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*; R. Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*; M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*.

⁷⁷ In 'Scratches on the Face of the Country; or What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen', *Critical Inquiry*, 12.1 (1985), 119-43, Mary Louise Pratt observes: 'Partly because it has never been fully professionalized or "disciplined", travel writing is one of the most polyphonous of genres. It therefore richly illustrates the fact that, in practice, ideology works through proliferation as well as containment of meaning. [...] readers of these books received nothing like a fixed set of differences that normalized self and Other in fixed ways. They were presented with multiple sets of differences, multiple fixed subject positions, multiple ways of legitimizing and familiarizing the process of European expansion. The discourses complemented each other even as they challenged and demystified each other' (p. 141).

⁷⁸ David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 2.

⁷⁹ The relationship between fiction and nonfiction is also explored by Dennis Porter in his discussion of the work of V. S. Naipaul. Contrasting journalism and romance, Porter observes: 'Whereas the former is

being classified as a hybrid form, whose authority (just like that of travel writing) is based on the 'avowedly autobiographical' nature of the account (p. 10).⁸⁰ This kind of authority, Spurr promptly adds, 'is as problematic as the claim to a subjective and independent status in interpretation'; yet this does not mean that all nonfiction writing is necessarily in collusion with the dominant ideology: on the contrary, the 'commanding, controlling gaze' which is a necessary requirement of 'the conditions which make the writer's work possible', can be used to resist the colonial discourse, 'to regard, ironically, the privileges of the colonizer and the disadvantages of the colonized' (p. 20).

The complex subject positions and ideological implications of travel writing have also been underlined by studies devoted to women travellers and their texts. Sara Mills's *Discourses of Difference*, for instance, sets women travel writers firmly within the colonial context and, while not claiming 'that women's travel writing is generically distinct from men's', it attempts to study the way in which the particular circumstances affecting the production and reception of women's travel texts may result 'in differences which seem to be due to gender'.⁸¹ Other feminist studies, such as Karen R. Lawrence's *Penelope*

associated with the idea of the investigation and reporting of contemporary events, the latter suggests ritual, magic, and traditional values as well as the narrativization of experience. The genres of the novel and travel writing, on the other hand, may be said to overcome the contradiction, since they fuse the two; they investigate and narrativize' (*Haunted Journeys*, p. 330).

⁸⁰ Spurr also points out that 'the presence of the writer as part of the narrative scene [...] conceals the most obvious effects of ideology and suppresses the historical dimension of the interpretive categories that are brought into play. The writer implicitly claims a "subjective and independent status" free from larger patterns of interpretation and deriving authority from the direct encounter with real events' (p. 9).

⁸¹ S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 6. See also pp. 108-22 for a detailed discussion of the reception of women's travel writing. An intelligent critique of Mill's positions can be found in Tim Youngs, 'Buttons and Souls: Some Thoughts on Commodities and Identity in Women's Travel Writing', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 1 (Spring 1997), 117-40. On women, travel and colonialism see also Susan L. Blake, 'A Woman's Treck: What Difference Does Gender Make?', in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, ed. by Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 19-34; Indira Ghose, 'The Female Gaze: Nineteenth-Century Women Travellers in India', PhD thesis, Berlin (1996); *Women's Voices on Africa: A Century of Travel Writing*, ed. by Patricia Romero (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1992).

Voyages, concentrate on the 'gendering of travel', that is on the exploration of the subject positions implicit in traditional male images of the traveller (and of the travel writer), and of the way in which, over the centuries, women have appropriated both the act of travelling and its literary tropes.⁸²

Lawrence's study also points to a further area of growth in travel writing criticism, that is, readings of travel books informed by Freudian psychoanalysis. Both Dennis Porter and Mark Cocker make extensive use of Freudian theory and imagery to explain the attraction exercised by travel on mankind in general and on certain types of individuals in particular, and to unravel the complex ambiguities of travel texts, the way in which they seem to both support and defy discourses of authority, or their constant combination of the search for the new, the unspoilt, the untrodden with an anxiety of belatedness, a constant feeling of walking in someone else's footsteps.⁸³ Both Cocker and Porter use a psychoanalytical approach to re-establish the role of the individual and of personal agency in determining the material and ideological circumstances of travel, rejecting, in particular, those interpretations of travel which have emerged from Foucault's notion of discourse as a determining condition of human action and textual expression.⁸⁴ If these and similar positions run the risk of downplaying the historical and ideological dimension of travel (writing), returning to a sort of biographical criticism,⁸⁵ other scholars have usefully drawn

⁸² K. R. Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages: Women and Travel in the British Literary Tradition* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994). A similar approach also characterizes Elizabeth A. Bohls's *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics, 1716-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

⁸³ On this subject see also A. Behdad, *Belated Travelers*; on the issue of originality see the by now classic Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁸⁴ For a detailed account of these contrasting perspectives on travel see in particular Porter's 'Orientalism and Its Problems'.

⁸⁵ In *Travellers in Africa*, Tim Youngs has expressed doubts about Porter's position which could also easily be applied to Cocker's book. Criticizing Porter's tendency to prefer idiosyncratic explanations of traveller's fantasies over historical and cultural ones, Youngs remarks: 'Porter, I think, plays up the idiosyncrasies too much, often resorting to biographical explanations for versions of the Oedipus complex that may, in his eyes, have affected the travellers' desires, their attitudes to authority, and thereby their views of the other. I do not

upon non Freudian theories of the psyche. Peter Bishop, for instance, uses not only Freud, but also Jung's psychology (for 'the methods of amplification, of reflecting individual imagery against the wider background of cultural symbolism'), and Hillman's archetypal psychology (with its 'attention [...] given to the fullness and depth of images'), in order to understand the 'cultural significance of landscapes'.⁸⁶ Lacanian theories of the self are also a recurrent reference, especially in post-structuralist analysis of notions of nomadic and migrant identity implicit in travelling experiences and their narrativization.⁸⁷ While behaviourist and anthropological theories of individual and group identity play an important role in Eric J. Leed, *The Mind of the Traveller*.

The link between travel and anthropology (and, consequently, between readings of travel books and readings of ethnographies) has been drawn by historians of the human sciences such as Sergio Moravia and Johannes Fabian, both of whom trace a clear connection between the spread of narrative accounts of travels to distant lands in the sixteenth and seventeenth century and the raise of the scientific monograph devoted to foreign (and primitive) peoples shortly afterwards.⁸⁸ Travel and travel writing have also become key elements in the discussion of ethnographic authority and its representational

find this emphasis on the individual convincing, and would prefer to see any such idiosyncrasy as structural' (p. 210).

⁸⁶ Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, pp. 8-9. The issue of landscape perception and representation has also been the subject of growing critical interest, both for its aesthetic and its ideological implications; on the subject see for instance *Writing Worlds*, ed. by T. J. Barnes and J. S. Duncan; Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997); *Cartographies: Poststructuralism and the Mapping of Bodies and Spaces*, ed. by Rosalyn Diprose and Robin Ferrell (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1991); Simon Shama, *Landscape and Memory* (London: Harper-Collins, 1995); *Romantic Geographies*, ed. by Colin Smethurst (Glasgow: University of Glasgow French and German Publications, 1996).

⁸⁷ See for instance the essays collected in *Travellers' Tales*, ed. by G. Robertson and others; connections between Lacanian theory and travel experiences are also drawn by Homi Bhabha in *The Location of Culture*.

⁸⁸ On the subject see Sergio Moravia, *La scienza dell'uomo nel Settecento* (Bari: Laterza, 1970), his four-volume study *Le origini dell'antropologia* (Bari: Laterza, 1976-77), and his introduction to Constantin-François de Volney's *Viaggio in Egitto e in Siria*. (Milan: Longanesi, 1974), pp. 17-42; by Fabian, see *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

strategies. Mary Louise Pratt has noted the close link between the experiential claims of the travel writer and the scientific ones of the ethnographer when attempting to justify their respective representations of the Other.⁸⁹ And Michel de Certeau has pointed out how the structure of the voyage, with its outbound journey and its final return home, frames the ethnographic account in a 'rhetoric of distance' which supports its representation of the Other both by assuring 'the strangeness of the picture' and by identifying the traveller as a 'faithful witness'.⁹⁰

Drawing on current anthropological approaches and post-modern theory, James Clifford has proposed an extended notion of travel (and of travel writing) which gives pride of place to such conditions as emigration, exile and 'nomadism', promoting, once again, a hybrid vision of travel — this time as a 'chronotope of culture (a setting or scene organising time and space in representable whole form)' — and arguing that 'new representational strategies are needed [...] notes for ways of looking at culture (along with tradition and identity) in terms of travel relations'.⁹¹ The centrality of travel to twentieth-century

⁸⁹ See for instance M. L. Pratt, 'Fieldwork in common places', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. by James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 27-50; and Gordon Brotherston, 'Towards a Grammatology of America: Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, and the Native New World Text', in *Europe and Its Others*, ed. by Francis Baker and others (Colchester: University of Essex, 1985), pp. 61-77.

⁹⁰ de Certeau, *Heterologies*, pp. 69-73.

⁹¹ J. Clifford, 'Traveling Cultures', in *Cultural Studies*, ed. by Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula A. Treichler (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 96-116 (p. 101). The essay is now also included in J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Ma, and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 17-46. The main reference in Clifford's article is to Mikhail Bakhtin and to his formulation of the concept of the chronotope, in 'Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel', now in M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84-258. Michael Holquist has defined Bakhtin's chronotope as 'an optic for reading texts as an x-rays of the forces at work in the culture system from which they spring' (pp. 425-6). Even if Bakhtin's analysis is specifically limited to the chronotope in literature — or, even more specifically, in the novel — the links with culture are clear, since literature, for Bakhtin, is an integral part of the realm of culture (see p. 253). In a paragraph devoted to the chronotopes of 'the road' and 'the encounter' Bakhtin deals directly with travel writing (or, in his context, with the novel of travel), where, he maintains, the function normally performed by the road in other types of novel is attributed to the wider chronotope of 'the alien world' (p. 245). It is worth noticing that the next paragraph in Bakhtin's argument deals with the importance of the connected chronotope of 'the threshold', a key element in that it is

experience is also asserted by Caren Kaplan, for whom questions of moving, travel and displacement, ranging from exile to tourism, are essential to an understanding of both modernist and postmodernist theories and practices, and 'to question travel [...] is to inquire into the ideological function of metaphors in discourses of displacement'.⁹² Kaplan's analysis of postmodern theory concentrates on the work of Jean Breaudillard, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, but the association between postmodernist criticism and travel writing could also be linked to Lyotard's notion of the postmodern age as marked by the end of master narratives, and the subsequent growth of critical interest in mixed or hybrid genres.⁹³ Furthermore, travel writing's reliance on a variety of heterogeneous sources has many points of contact with postmodern textuality, its reliance on pastiche, and its re-shaping of notions of plagiarism and originality as described, for instance, by Fredric Jameson.⁹⁴

Though still not central in terms of the literary canon, English language travel writing is thus enjoying a period of particular favour and visibility among Anglo-American critics as well as audiences. Furthermore, both in Britain and the USA, through the acceptance and re-evaluation of notions of textual hybridity and heterogeneity, and the focalization upon the connection between formal elements on the one hand and historical

'the chronotope of the crisis and break in a life' (p. 248). From its conception, then, the idea of chronotope is associated with that of a dynamic and relational identity formation, a complex vision of culture.

⁹² C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 26. On exile, nomadism and other forms of displacement see also *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, ed. by Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1994); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1993); Bruce Robbins, 'Secularism, Elitism, Progress, and Other Transgressions: On Edward Said's "Voyage in"', *Social Text*, 40 (1994), 25-37.

⁹³ See Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

⁹⁴ See F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism, Or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146 (1984), 53-92. On this subject see also Paul Rabinow, 'Representations are Social Facts: Modernity and Post-Modernity in Anthropology' in *Writing Culture*, ed. by J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus, pp. 234-61.

and social functions on the other, the debate about the genre appears to have overcome many of the impasses (such as the antinomies of factual versus fictional, or literary versus non literary narrative) which still constrain the Italian critical approach to the genre.

(iv) Minor Literature

While the characteristics of British (and American) travel writing and travel writing criticism described in the previous section do not constitute a strict generic norm, they create 'a preconstituted horizon of expectations' which will be 'ready at hand [...] to orient the reader's [...] understanding and to enable a qualifying reception'.⁹⁵ Such generic expectations may also influence the translator, inviting him/her (or the publishing industry which commissions the work) to select for translation texts which do not dramatically break the conventions of English language travel writing, and to adopt domesticating strategies which will bring the foreign text in line with its new readership, or at least to gesture to the recontextualization of the work in a different literary and cultural system. In line with the theories of translation previously outlined in this chapter, and given the greater centrality and prestige enjoyed by travel writing within the British (poly)system in comparison to its Italian counterpart, we might in fact expect to see a predominance of domesticating strategies if and when Italian travel writing is translated into English. If this were the case, the study of Italian travel writing in English translation would not only confirm the hypotheses formulated by polysystem theory, but would also be in line both with Lefevere's assertions about the role of poetics in determining selection and translation strategies, and

⁹⁵ Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 79.

with Venuti's observations about the domesticating and acculturating tendencies of hegemonic cultures. At the same time, we could also expect contemporary Italian travel writing (a genre 'in disguise' in its original context) to become at once more visible and more regulated by generic norms once translated into English. Paradoxically, then, an 'invisible genre' might be set free, that is both recognized and 'liberated' from the constraints of a particular source system, through the act of translating, thus adding a new dimension to Walter Benjamin's image of translation as the after-life of a text.⁹⁶

Yet this hierarchical view of 'strong' and 'weak' cultures, 'central' and 'marginal' texts, is not necessarily the sole possible outcome of a comparative approach to genre in translation. As we have seen, recent criticism of the polysystemic approach has pointed out the potentially central and innovative role of peripheries in the dynamics of the literary (poly)system. Such remarks constitute a powerful critique of polysystem theory and of its deterministic and canon-oriented tendencies, which could be assimilated to what Luhmann has described as the bias towards centrality and order typical of modern Western culture.⁹⁷ In contrast, post-structuralist theoretical approaches underline the powerful disruptions enacted by minor literature — as well as, or in combination with, translation.⁹⁸ In their essay 'Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature mineure?' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari go as far as maintaining that styles, genres and literary movements should actively aim at being

⁹⁶ See W. Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator', in *Illuminations*, pp. 69-82.

⁹⁷ See N. Luhmann, *The Differentiation of Society*, p. xv.

⁹⁸ See for instance Dominique Jullien's discussion of marginality as 'a prerequisite for universality' in literature, in 'Biography of an Immortal', *Comparative Literature*, 47 (1995), 136-59 (pp. 140-41). Even a structuralist critic like Maria Corti, on the other hand, maintains that the study of genres as social phenomena leads one to assign special value to minor writers and their function in literary systems (*Principi della comunicazione letteraria*, pp. 182-85). The re-evaluation of 'minority' status is not limited, however, to literary criticism. Homi Bhabha, a theorist of identity and postcoloniality, has spoken of the 'fragmented, partially occluded values of minority discourse' (*The Location of Culture*, p. 229). Bhabha quotes Abdul Janmohamed and David Lloyd, according to whom 'becoming minor' is 'a subject position' articulating 'alternative practices and values' (*The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, ed. by A. Janmohamed and D. Lloyd (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 8; quoted in Bhabha, p. 229).

marginal, since minor literature, by virtue of its conditions, is the only one which can aspire to be great and revolutionary.⁹⁹ According to Deleuze and Guattari, the qualification of 'minor' does not refer to a particular literature as a whole, but to 'le conditions révolutionnaires de toute littérature au sein de celle qu'on appelle grande (ou établie)' (p. 33). Minor literature, unlike its major and canonic counterpart, is uncontained and uncontainable, constantly changeable and virtually unpoliced, since its marginality allows it to escape all fixation and codification.¹⁰⁰

In this perspective, translation may become an instrument of containment rather than recognition and 'liberation'. The selection, for translation purposes, of texts which appear easy to reconcile with the generic expectations operating in the target culture, and the subsequent choice of fluent, domesticating translation strategies which assimilate the foreign text to domestic models and makes it immediately recognizable to the target audience, might after all amount to the imposition of a further (and even stronger) set of constraints upon the source text, especially when this belongs to a minor, marginal — and hence, to an extent, unconstrained — genre. The inscription, through translation, of contemporary Italian travel writing within the generic expectations of an Anglo-American audience might then result in the containment of its potentially disruptive representational strategies, rather than (or together with) its overdue recognition as 'travel literature'.

⁹⁹ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature mineure?', in *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit, 1975), pp. 29-50 (p. 48 and p. 50). For a discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor literature see Susan Ingram, 'When Memory is Cross-Cultural Translation: Eva Hoffman's Schizophrenic Autobiography', *TTR*, 9.1 (1996), 259-76.

¹⁰⁰ In *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi (London: The Athlone Press, 1988), Deleuze and Guattari reiterate that 'authors termed "minor" [...] are in fact the greatest, the only greats' (p. 105), and go on to state: 'There is a universal figure of minoritarian consciousness as the becoming of everybody, and that becoming is creation. One does not attain it by acquiring the majority. The figure to which we are referring is continuous variation, as an amplitude that continually oversteps the representative threshold of the majoritarian standard, by excess or default' (p. 106).

Yet, we must not exclude other possibilities. Given the non deterministic nature of cultural systems and translation norms,¹⁰¹ we may well find texts chosen and translated precisely for their 'minor' and innovative qualities and their ability to challenge the dominant models of the target culture and the expectations of the target audience.¹⁰² Or we might hypothesize the existence of foreignizing translations which apparently preserve the Otherness of the source text, but do so only in order to distance it from the target culture and its audiences, prevent identification on the part of the reader, and thus contain the text within the boundaries of stereotypical representations of foreign cultures. Finally, we might even encounter translations which are apparently informed by domesticating strategies but — thanks to the marginality of the source text and the inexhaustible, uncontainable Otherness of translation — manage to maintain their innovative power all the same. This kind of dynamics, which highlights the complexity of the relationship between historically defined source and target cultures, would also require a re-definition of the relationship between 'strong' and 'weak' systems, questioning the monolithic quality often assigned to

¹⁰¹ For a thorough discussion of the nature of translation norms see Hermans, 'Norms and the Determination of Translation: A Theoretical Framework', in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, ed. by Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal, pp. 25-51, 'Translation and Normativity', and 'The Production and Reproduction of Translation: System Theory and Historical Context' (forthcoming).

¹⁰² In 'Translation, Heterogeneity, Linguistics', *TTR*, 9.1 (1996), 91-115, Lawrence Venuti attempts the theorization of a 'minoritizing translation' based on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor literature and consisting in selecting texts which 'possess minority status in their cultures, a marginal position in their native canons or that, in translation, can be useful in minoritizing the standard dialect and dominant cultural forms in American English' (p. 92). As an example of this kind of practice, Venuti uses his own version of some of Igino Ugo Tarchetti's work, in which the use of strategies such as archaism and calque allowed Venuti to follow his own maxim, according to which 'an American literary translator must not be co-operative, but challenging, not communicative, but provocative' (p. 106). Venuti's project (in keeping with Deleuze and Guattari's theory of minor literature) is openly political, and he declares that the strategies he recommends aim 'to redress the global hegemony of English, to interrogate American cultural and political values, to evoke the foreignness of the foreign text'. Yet the translator ends up having to defend himself from accusations of 'an experimentalism that would seem to narrow [his] audience and contradict [his own] democratic agenda' (p. 94). As a solution Venuti can only propose a rather utopian form of translation which 'draws on the conventionalized language of popular culture [...] to render a foreign text that might be regarded as elite literature in a seamlessly fluent translation', and at the same time seeks 'to invent a minor language that cuts across cultural divisions and hierarchies' (p. 95).

hegemonic cultures and stressing the continuous and unpredictable criss-crossing of interference between different cultures, different discourses, different readings — and different translations.

(v) Studying Contemporary Italian Travel Writing in English Translation

The reception-focused, comparative approach to genre outlined in the previous sections can provide a way out from the constraints placed on the analysis of contemporary Italian travel writing and on the appreciation of its functions by a perspective based exclusively on a notion of national literature. At the same time, this methodology can also highlight systemic and ideological issues which influence the selection and translation strategies operating in the target culture. Translation is thus presented as both a material condition of the transfer of (groups of) texts from one culture to another, and a methodological and analytical framework which can highlight constraints and characteristics of both the source and target texts under examination.

In order to support such a comparative methodology, however, we need to carry out a reading of Italian texts and their translations into English which does not aim to evaluate the 'quality' and establish the 'merits' of the target text by measuring its faithfulness to the original, but rather attempts to use translation as a heuristic tool to enhance our understanding of both source and target text and of their conditions of production, distribution and reception. Marilyn Gaddis Rose, taking up a label suggested by Joanne Englebert, has described such a heuristic process as a 'stereoscopic reading', that is a 'way of reading literature' which attempts to demonstrate that 'the linking of translation studies

and literary criticism enriches the reading of literature and other serious pieces of rhetoric throughout the humanities and social sciences'.¹⁰³ A 'stereoscopic strategy' will accommodate 'whatever mode of translating is being followed from the most literal to the most free' in 'a reading that moves back and forth among source texts and one or more target texts'; it will uncover 'the interliminal richness, [...] the harmony and disjunction among the texts'; and it will give 'a full, but never complete, enhanced explication weaving within the back-and-forth whatever socio-historical, biographical and psychological factors seem necessary'.¹⁰⁴ While Gaddis Rose's 'stereoscopic reading' seems to invite essentially a hermeneutics of the text, Lawrence Venuti's suggestion of a 'symptomatic reading' moves swiftly from the stylistic to the ideological level. According to Venuti, while 'a humanist method of reading translations' elides the necessary discontinuities 'between the source-language text and the translation and within the translation itself', a 'symptomatic reading [...] locates discontinuities at the level of diction, syntax, or discourse that reveal the translation to be a violent rewriting of the foreign text, a strategic intervention into the target-language culture, at once dependent on and abusive of domestic values'.¹⁰⁵ The aim of such a reading 'is not to assess the "freedom" or "fidelity" of a translation, but rather to uncover the canons of accuracy by which it is produced and judged', and the method also constitutes 'an historicist approach to the study of translations' since it 'aims to situate canons of accuracy in their specific cultural moments' (pp. 37-38). In practice, this means that a comparative analysis cannot be limited to individual, decontextualized couples of source and target texts, but must take into account the importance of channels of

¹⁰³ M. Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism*, p. 90 and p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Gaddis Rose, p. 2 and p. 54; Gaddis Rose's uses the label 'interliminal' (a term coined by the American philosopher Stephen David Ross) to indicate an area in between cultures where interferences take place (pp. 87-88).

¹⁰⁵ L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 24-25.

publication, reviews and other indicators of the cultural and historical circumstances affecting the selection and the translation of (groups of) texts. At the same time, the back-and-forth movement suggested by Gaddis Rose allows this kind of reading to make norms and conventions regulating both the horizons of expectation of the source text(s) and of the translations more visible. In a contrastive reading mechanisms of praise and sanction (relating to both the original and the translation) become more immediately visible, and so do their real and apparent justifications.

The case studies which make up the second part of the present study attempt to carry out readings of this kind, and to use translation as a 'reactive agent' in order to ask questions such as what happens when Italian 'travel writing' (in the broadest sense of the label) gets translated into a culture which has a much more established space for that genre? What gets translated? Under what historical and cultural circumstances? What strategies are adopted? How is the translation received? And what can all this tell us not only about the target system, but also about its relationship with the source system and about the criss-crossing of interference between the two identified at the end of the previous section?

3. TRAVEL AND/AS TRANSLATION

(i) Talking to the Other

The uses of translation outlined in the preceding chapter are eminently instrumental: translation has been described as a reactive agent, a methodological tool in the study of the metamorphoses undergone by travel writing as it moves from a literary system where it occupies only a very marginal (even invisible) position to another where the genre is more established and canonized. Yet the relationship between travel and translation involves a complex pattern of representations, interferences, readings and re-readings, cultural and linguistic transfers. This pattern needs to be unravelled before the tool of translation analysis can be applied to a study of the strategies adopted in individual cases of translation and of their possible significance in the context of historically defined cultures and literary systems. Following the various threads of the web can also highlight what translations ‘do’ through their representational strategies and the uses they are put to in the socio-historical system(s) in which they operate. Questions of translation can then be seen as complex practices involved in the construction of images and identities, and in the interaction between cultures.

At a first, surface level, all travel (at least all travel into other countries and cultures) implies, literally, some form of translation.¹ In most cases this means finding ways of

¹ As stated in the Introduction, the present study deals only with ‘foreign’ travel, excluding the area of ‘home’ travel, which would need a different kind of analysis, centred on issues of self-representation and the construction of national identities. Other possible forms of travel, such as those involved in migration, exile or what James Clifford has termed ‘dwelling/travelling’ (‘Traveling Cultures’, p. 104) are also excluded from the scope of the present study. While extremely interesting for a re-assessment of the role and meaningfulness of

communicating with people who do not speak the same language. It is possible to travel through foreign lands avoiding all contact with 'the locals', though this usually implies either their total absence (as in solitary crossings of deserts and arctic regions), or, more often, the presence of an infrastructure (usually guaranteed by expatriate residents, colonial institutions or the tourist industry) which allows the traveller to remain inside a protective cocoon and yet survive — possibly even end up with a tale to tell. In most other cases, however, the traveller has to establish some form of contact with the local people and if s/he wants to engage in less than elementary exchanges of meaning, goods or experience, s/he needs to either learn the local language or, in some cases, teach it.²

The choice between these two strategies is not casual, but rather ambiguously linked to issues of relative power and self-perception. In contexts characterized by markedly asymmetrical relationships of power, the implications of the game of 'who is learning whose language' become particularly evident: the extreme examples of the power of the foreigner who imposes his (or sometimes her) own words are to be found in colonial situations, and the paradigmatic examples of traveller versus local roles in such contexts are

the global practices of contemporary life, such forms of travel evade even an inclusive definition of travel literature and would lead (as they do in the case of Clifford's studies) to focus on the emergence of cultural futures (and future modes of textuality), rather than to an analysis of existing genres and critical traditions. On these alternative perspectives see J. Clifford, 'Introduction: The Pure Products Go Crazy', in *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, Ma. and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 1-17. On the theme of contemporary modes of travel and their cultural significance see also J. Clifford, *Routes*, and C. Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*.

² 'Elementary' exchanges can be supported by non-verbal forms of communication, though it is debatable whether these do not actually involve some form of translation too: no two communities have identical gestural or kinetic codes, and the presumption of universal intelligibility of body language may lead to serious breakdowns in communication. A special case in the phenomenology of travel is also constituted by movement between locations and cultures which share a common language. Yet very often (as in the case of colonial and ex-colonial territories) the use of the same language does not imply the presence of a thoroughly integrated culture, and may well involve asymmetries of power. This is the case in territories where an official national language was at some point imported and imposed upon native populations, which may either have become bilingual or have gradually abandoned the original tongue. In these and similar situations it is not irrelevant to ask questions such as who learnt whose language, and which culture got translated into the terms the other. For a discussion of 'cultural translation' see section iv in this same chapter.

embodied by the fictional figure of Robinson Crusoe and the historical (and yet eminently legendary) one of la Malinche, the Mayan woman who became Cortes's interpreter.³ Robinson, imposing names on people and objects and conducting communication on his own terms, is the paradigmatic active, appropriative and acculturating Western man, conquering (and translating) the new world; while la Malinche, slave and mistress of the foreigner, embodies the passive, submissive image often associated with translation.⁴

La Malinche also introduces the figure of the interpreter, often an indispensable presence for the traveller in need of translation, whether in the shape of a more experienced travelling companion or, more often, that of an 'educated', acculturated local. Personifications of such interpreters abound in the history of travel (and travel writing): from the 'bear-leader' accompanying the young gentleman on the Grand Tour of Europe, to the local 'cicerone' ready to take foreigners through the labyrinth of impressive monuments and insidious alleys (both literal and metaphorical) of foreign cities, and all the way to

³ Yet even in less obvious circumstances, power and status are part of the picture, as implicitly suggested by the following comparison of the different attitudes and choices of sixteenth-century British travellers to Italy and their eighteenth-century heirs, taken from R. S. Pine-Coffin, *Bibliography of British and American Travel in Italy to 1860* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1974): 'The attitude of the touring British had now changed to the very opposite of the exemplary behaviour noted by Moryson. In his day tourists in Italy were uncertain of their reception in a country where their own nation was thought to be backward. They found many foreign customs strange and some absurd, but they did their best to pocket their pride and stifle their laughter. They did nothing to offend or render themselves egregious. [...] But by the middle of the eighteenth century, when the contrast between prosperity at home and decline in Italy had become marked, the British went abroad as patrons and the need for dissimulation was past. They no longer sought Italian company for the benefits it might bring them. Instead they found their hosts dull and insipid. They avoided them at mixed receptions, preferred to exclude them from their own parties, and *even disdained to learn the language*' (p. 50, my italics). See also Ingrid Kuczynski, 'The Image of the Other in Eighteenth-Century English European Travel Literature', in *English Studies in Transition*, ed. by Robert Clark and Piero Boitani (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 185-95.

⁴ On the figure of Robinson see P. Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, pp. 175-222. On la Malinche see Sherry Simon, *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). On the association of sexual imagery and connotations to the idea of translation see (beside Simon's book) Susan Bassnett, 'Engendering Anew: Translation and Cultural Politics', in *The Knowledges of the Translator: From Literary Interpretation to Machine Classification*, ed. by Malcolm Coulthard and Patricia Anne Odber de Baubeta (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1996), pp. 53-66; and Lori Chamberlain, 'Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation', in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. by L. Venuti, pp. 57-74. The sexual connotations attributed to the figure of the interpreter are a feature of many travel texts, and are not necessarily associated with female characters; see for instance the Arab boys in T. E. Lawrence's *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962; 1st edn 1926).

modern tour leaders and guides, who can indeed be seen as reincarnations of 'ciceroni' and 'bear-leaders' in the era of mass tourism and packaged tours.⁵ If we move from the context of tourism to the one of exploration and colonization, the role of the interpreter is assumed either by Westerners who had had extensive contact with the 'natives', or by 'natives' who had been turned, often by means of kidnapping and forced acculturation, into bi-lingual and supposedly bi-cultural beings.⁶ The local interpreter is always the most ambiguous of the two figures: s/he is an allied and yet a potential enemy to both the traveller and the 'travelees',⁷ bound to 'betray' either or both, and suspect to all. The betrayals s/he can be accused of are sometimes petty, as in the many accusations of colluding with hosts and shopkeepers in exacting extortionate prices from naïf tourists. Yet even these sins (or presumed sins) can contribute to the creation of stereotypes which will then stick to an entire culture and endure for centuries.⁸ 'Betrayals' such as those of la Malinche, however, have much more dramatic effects: stigmatized as the instrument of the fall of the Aztec empire into the hands of the Spanish *conquistadores*, the woman/interpreter carries the guilt of 'speaking the enemy's language and bearing the enemy's children', as Sherry Simon recently put it.⁹ Yet Simon also observes that the figure of la Malinche is being re-assessed as 'a symbol of the cross-breeding of cultures, glorifying mixture to the point of impurity,

⁵ See A. Brillì, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte*, pp. 85-91; C. Hibbert, *The Grand Tour*, pp. 19-39.

⁶ On these figures and practices see Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, pp. 140-47.

⁷ The term is borrowed from Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, p. 7.

⁸ The image of the deceitful Italian (but his place could be taken by other 'locals') is one of the most common and resilient both in travel accounts and other forms of textual representation produced in Britain between the sixteenth and the twentieth century. While plenty of historical and anecdotal reasons can be invoked to justify such an enduring stereotype, one is left wondering whether the constant air of suspicion which animates descriptions of travellers' contacts with hosts and *vetturini* might not have something to do with the difficulties of communication and with the mistrust of the (often invisible) figure of the interpreter. See Pine-Coffin, *Bibliography of British and American Travel in Italy to 1860*, p. 5, pp. 15-17; and Pemble, *The Mediterranean Passion*, pp. 260-61. Fussell (*Abroad*, pp. 46-47) discusses modern 'touts' (and 'residents of Naples' with a habit of stealing tourists' luggage!) in much the same terms.

⁹ Simon, *Gender in Translation*, p. 40. See also Peter Hulme's discussion of the figure of Pocahontas and of the exceptional character of her myth (*Colonial Encounters*, pp. 137-73): while interpreters are normally suspicious figures, she is 'redeemed' by the legend of her love for John Smith (p. 141).

representing the powers and the dangers associated with the role of intermediary' (p. 41).

Issues of power thus link the historical figure of the interpreter and her myth to modern developments in thinking about translation:

The legend of la Malinche, and the contemporary variations on its theme, suggest the points of tension which mark the dynamics of translation between unequal partners: the conflicts between loyalty and authority, agency and submission. The Mayan slave's story presents a particularly dramatic version of the double-bind situation which traps cultural intermediaries between conflicting systems of values, and brings into play the Judeo-Christian association of sexuality, language and betrayal. Her modern descendants' more playful enactments of this dialogue are yet profoundly motivated by the inequalities of the new international order. Their combined story reminds us that, as mediators standing between nations, translators occupy an uncomfortable and often uncategorizable position. (p. 41)

Along these lines of thought, which connect issues of intercultural exchange, power, identity politics, and metaphors often taken from the imagery of gendered relationships and sexuality, the figure and function of the interpreter and his/her implication in the dynamics of travel and communication provide another direct link between travel writing and contemporary translation theories: this time it is translation which implies travel, and can be discussed in terms of travel and its associated features and characters. Both scholars of travel and of translation have remarked on the etymological link between the two activities, exemplified by the Latin roots *translatio* and *traductio* which imply movement, transportation, displacement, both on a physical and a metaphorical level (and it has been remarked, too, that the Greek word *metaphora* indicates a change of place and can still be seen today on buses and removal vans).¹⁰ Throughout the centuries the translator has often been seen as, among other things, an explorer, a discoverer and even a smuggler of riches

¹⁰ M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, pp. 1-2, and Michael Hanne, 'Introduction', in *Literature and Travel*, ed. by Michael Hanne (Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga: Rodopi, 1993), pp. 3-7 (p. 6).

across borders.¹¹ The translator as traveller, the traveller as translator: both are ambiguous and deeply suspicious figures, who ask to be trusted in their faithfulness to the reality or the words they interpret, in their reading and rendering of places, people, texts which we can only access through them. The following romanticized description could, in fact, apply just as well to either figure and it could certainly be used to portray the intercultural interpreter and his/her 'in betweenness':

Paradoxically, although for his own purposes he has decided that frontiers do not exist, and although he works in a sense to eliminate boundaries, he depends on them absolutely; he trades on the existence of them. He is by necessity a man of divided allegiances, neither flesh nor fowl, a lonely, shadowy character, mistrusted by everyone. And probably envied a little in a covert way, too, for, more positively, he stands for freedom, risk, excitement and adventure. An aura of envy has always hung over the smuggler, and a lot of this is also due the translator.¹²

Such portraits raise the essential and related issues of authenticity, veracity, and faithfulness: interpreters, translators and travellers are suspect mediators who must constantly strive to prove the reliability and good faith of their tales, the truthfulness of their words and their own trustworthiness in the face of an audience who can only access 'the original' vicariously, and thus both requires and resents the presence of an intermediary. Yet there is also a sense of fascination with the power of that intermediary to tell lies, with his/her potentially roguish character, with his/her access to other worlds which may well

¹¹ On this whole series of images see (besides Campbell and Hanne) E. Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism*, p. 109; Yves Gambier and others, 'Translators and the Transmission of Cultural Values', in *Translators through History*, ed. by Jean Delisle and Judith Woodsworth (Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1995), pp. 191-225 (pp. 222-24); B. Godard, 'Writing Between Cultures', pp. 56-58; Theo Hermans, 'Images of Translation: Metaphor and Imagery in the Renaissance Discourse on Translation', in *The Manipulation of Literatures*, ed. by T. Hermans, pp. 103-35 (pp. 118-19).

¹² P. Stratford, 'Translation as Creation', in *Figures in a Ground: Canadian Essays on Modern Literature Collected in Honor of Sheila Watson*, ed. by Diane Bessai and David Jackel (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1978); quoted in Delisle and Woodsworth, p. 222.

include those of fantasy and marvel.¹³ What ultimately matters is the ability to construct images which, though necessarily not 'real', may retain a quality of realism; to provide evidence of sorts on which to anchor one's version of the facts; to exploit validating mechanisms which will be acceptable to one's audience. The strategies adopted vary, but no translator or traveller can ignore the issue and get away with it without losing his/her unstable, slippery power.

The ambiguity of the intercultural interpreter as embodied by la Malinche, also reminds us that power is not a straightforward game, based on evident, linear relationships between the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the weak: as pointed out in different ways by Gramsci, Foucault, Said and, recently, Homi Bhabha, hegemony and cultural strength are established through much subtler mechanisms, which also carry within themselves the possibility of resistance.¹⁴ Such complex ambiguities can indeed be found in the play of languages and interpreters which constitutes an integral part of travel: the traveller (anthropologist, tourist, ...) who learns the local language is not necessarily doing so because s/he occupies a 'weak' position with respect to the people and culture s/he is addressing, nor is that choice a guarantee of enlightened attitudes. An element of paternalism and an appropriative attitude may well be what really underlies such communicative strategies. The 'Orientalist' who asserts his superior mastery of exotic languages and cultures does so from a position of strength which allows him to displace

¹³ On marvel and travel see Pierre-Yves Badel, 'Lire la merveille selon Marco Polo', *Revue des Sciences Humaines*, 183 (July-September 1981), pp. 7-16.

¹⁴ On Gramsci's concept of hegemony and its development see *A Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935*, ed. by David Forgacs (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), pp. 189-221. For Foucault's ideas on the nature of relationships of power see in particular *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan (London: Vintage 1977) and *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings. 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. by Colin Gordon and others (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980). Said discusses power, resistance and opposition in *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 230-340. And Homi Bhabha (*The Location of Culture*, pp. 85-92) has proposed the notion of mimicry (inspired by the work of Jacques Lacan) as a strategy for the defiance and reappropriation of power.

local knowledge and to create 'the Orient, the Oriental and his world', perceived as being 'in need of corrective study by the West'.¹⁵ Holding similar assumptions, the tourist who expects to get by with a few phrases of the foreign 'lingo' and is both surprised and resentful if the locals talk back (possibly fluently) in his/her own language, manifests deep-rooted assumptions about the position of foreign languages in the universalist tradition of Western liberal education, and exposes the necessary association between such an ideal and a hierarchical model of culture and progress in which the affluent, 'learned' tourist, as a member of an advanced society, can both afford and enjoy the 'exoticizing' process of learning a foreign language, but does not expect to find in more 'backward' locations individuals who are capable of the same achievements.¹⁶ By the same token, that affluent tourist may also forget to take into account the practical, rather than pleasurable, implications of language skills in societies where either colonial rule or neo-colonial market economies make interlanguage communication a sheer necessity. In the attempt to imagine himself/herself as an explorer of unspoilt realities the tourist may then also be deeply irritated by the discovery that the locals have already been 'corrupted' enough to have learnt his/her own language, and to use it to their own advantage.¹⁷ On the other hand, the communicative strategies of the 'natives', whether they involve learning the language of the foreign visitor or allowing him/her to access the local one, may well lead to forms of resistance, to disguised re-appropriations of power and control over one's own words: no traveller can ultimately be sure that what s/he has learnt from the locals is the truth, that

¹⁵ E. Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 40-41.

¹⁶ On the ambiguities of tourism and language learning see B. Curtis and C. Pajaczkowska, "'Getting There": Travel, Time and Narrative'.

¹⁷ Fussell (*Abroad*, p. 47) defines this modern type of tourist ('not to be confused with the traveller'), as an 'anti-tourist': 'Abroad, the techniques practised by anti-tourists anxious to assert their difference from all those tourists are more shifty. All involve attempts to merge into the surroundings, like speaking the language, even badly.' On tourism and anti-tourism see also J. Buzard, *Unbeaten Tracks*.

his/her questions have received sincere or exhaustive answers, that, whatever the motivation behind it, s/he is not being deceived.

Similar positions (as well as the connected issues of relative power and authority) have recently been observed in the practices of ethnographic fieldwork. Mary Louise Pratt, in particular, has examined the work done by Marjorie Shostak on the !Kung people and its exposure of 'the pretence or fantasy of the first encounter':¹⁸ although in other ways quite aware of the historical circumstances surrounding her own contacts with the bushmen, Shostak cannot avoid being deeply disappointed at the immediate discovery that 'far from being the first European on the scene [she] is even a long way from being the first anthropologist', and that the 'others are fallen, corrupted not only as non Europeans, but specifically as ethnographic informants'.¹⁹ According to Pratt's analysis Shostak 'ultimately capitulates to this degraded anthropological world, [...], and only then finds a fieldwork relationship that is in fact enormously productive for ethnographic purposes' (p. 44). Yet it is intriguing to note that neither the ethnographer nor the critic seem to pay attention to the language dynamics involved in this process: has Nisa, Shostak's main informant, learned the language of the anthropologists (or, indeed, of the colonizers who persecuted her people for centuries)? or is the anthropologist learning her language, in the best ethnographic tradition? and how do these alternative possibilities affect Shostak's hope to use Nisa's accounts in order to 'clarify some of the issues raised by the American women's movement',²⁰ or her attempt to read her own relationship with Nisa in terms of 'female

¹⁸ M. L. Pratt, 'Fieldwork in common places', p. 44. The book Pratt is analysing is Marjorie Shostak, *Nisa: The life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

¹⁹ The natives in fact greet Shostak's arrival by praising the anthropologists who had visited them before her and offering to perform for her, as they did for her predecessors, as long as she will deliver the same sort of presents (Shostak, quoted by Pratt, p. 44).

²⁰ Shostak, quoted in Pratt, p. 48.

solidarity and intimacy'?²¹ While Pratt raises these last questions, the role played by language in looking for possible answers seems to escape her: 'translation' remains invisible, communication remains 'transparent' and the deeper implications of such omissions for the uncovering of the asymmetries of the encounter between native and foreigner remain unexplored.

It is worth remembering that while the colonial world may offer some of the most vivid examples of such attitudes and practices as the ones described above, these are not in any way limited to such contexts. Traditionally, similar dynamics were established even among different European nations or areas: at different times in history the barbaric North or the corrupted and decadent South have been subjected to this process of 'othering'.²² Today, the dynamics of neo-colonialism and globalization as well as the ever increasing size of the tourist industry, produce a rich pattern of exchanges and itineraries through which relationships of power and representation are continuously remoulded. Some of the traditional Western centres increasingly undergo processes of reification and commodification, and are transformed into complex machineries for the delivery of tourist goods and services. At the same time, those centres continue to send out ever growing masses of travellers in search of (just as reified) exotic locations, or even create their own, fake, primitive paradises through processes of re-exoticization.²³ Yet the practices of translation involved in these types of contact remain just as invisible as the ones which

²¹ Pratt, p. 45.

²² Italy has certainly embodied such an 'other', and processes of the type more readily associated with Orientalism have also applied to the representations produced by foreign travellers to the peninsula: on this subject see Chapter 1, section ii.

²³ On the topic of tourism and commodification see for instance Dennis Porter, 'Modernism and the Dream of Travel' in *Literature and Travel*, ed. by M. Hanne, pp. 53-70; and Fussell's contemptuous musings on 'pseudo-places' (*Abroad*, 43-50). Michel de Certeau has pointed out that all processes of exoticization (even when they operate within one culture, as in the case of the re-evaluation of folklore) involve both appropriating and killing their objects (*Heterologies*, p. 121).

operate in colonial contexts, with similar consequences for our understanding of the mechanisms at work.

ii Writing (and Translating) for the Home Reader

The relationship between travel and translation becomes even more complex when we turn from the question of dialogue and oral exchanges to the issue of travel *writing* as such and to its textual practices. Whichever the communication strategy chosen (learning the other's language, teaching one's own, finding or 'manufacturing' an interpreter) and the genre (be it travelogues, diaries, ethnographic studies, or even phrase-books for tourists) translation will also become a constitutive element of the text which is the product and testimony of the travelling experience. Here the need for translation is dictated by the demands of the target readership. Western travel writing,²⁴ in its most inclusive definition, is written for a home readership: the addressees of the letters from abroad, the family descendants who inherit the unpublished travel diary, the academic community which is going to judge the standard of a learned monograph, or the general public which may be interested in

²⁴ The qualification 'Western' is necessary here, since the remarks that follow could not be directly applied to travel writing produced, for instance by post-colonial writers, whose target readership is much more complex and shifting. This is the case, for instance, of Naipaul's travel books, which offer to a Western readership visions of Asia produced by a non-Western (if highly Westernized) writer; on Naipaul's travel writing see David Whitley, 'Cultural identities under pressure', in *The Uses of Autobiography*, ed. by Julia Swindells (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), pp. 64-72. The issue underlying Naipaul's and similar cases is highly debated by post-colonial critics and writers, among whom the question of language choice and target audience is perceived as critical; on the subject see the by now classic essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' by Gayatri C. Spivak, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271-313; on the relationship between the subaltern and translation see T. Niranjana, *Siting Translation*. The need to distinguish between 'Western' and 'non-Western' texts should not be construed as an essentialist assertion of the existence of a monolithic 'Western culture'. As discussed in Chapter 1, even within the confines of Europe issues of identity and otherness, centrality and marginality do arise, and determine the modalities of relationships between different groups, cultures and nations. For a criticism of essentialist notions of 'the West' see M. Cronin, 'Altered States: Translation and Minority Languages'.

purchasing a book. It is the duty of the traveller-turned-writer to write back, inform, report, and in fact medieval and renaissance treatises of advice to travellers (whether they be merchants, noblemen or the early grand tourists) make it quite clear that all observation is worth writing down if it can be of use to one's own 'Country and calling'.²⁵ The mirroring recommendation, endlessly repeated to travellers, is that they should maintain their own identity, learn about (and sometimes from) the Other, but under no circumstances end up going native: from the point of view of the society of origin the journey must end in a safe return home.²⁶ For the travel writer this homecoming may sometimes only happen through the symbolic means of the text, but the message at least, even if only in a bottle, needs to get there.²⁷ The Western traveller who really loses himself/herself and 'goes native' does not leave traces for the people at home, does not write back, does not want to be found or followed. The decision to write, on the other hand, testifies to the unbroken umbilical cord still linking him/her to the point of origin, of the unabandoned reassurance of a possible, if forever deferred, return — and, most of the time, also of a lingering hope and desire to

²⁵ The specific reference is to Sir Philip Sidney, 'A Letter to the Same Purpose', p. 124; many examples of detailed lists of things to observe are also to be found in guides such as Misson's *Nouveau Voyage d'Italie* (1691).

²⁶ Remarks to this effect are to be found, for instance, in P. Sidney, 'A Letter to the Same Purpose', while Dennis Porter notes that in the colonial age "to go native" [...] was the ultimate apostasy' (*Haunted Journeys*, 230). An interesting variation on this theme was offered by Francis Osborne in his *Advice to a Son: Or Directions for Your Better Conduct through the Various and Most Important Encounters of Life* (London, 1656), where the warning about losing oneself takes the form of a series of recommendations against falling in love with foreign women (pp. 84-85). The association of sexual encounter and danger is a typical feature of travel and exploration narratives; on this topic see R. Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions*.

²⁷ Paul Fussell (*Abroad*, pp. 208-09) makes a similar point about contemporary travel writing starting from a historical analysis of the genre. He takes as his starting point the literary origins of travel literature understood as 'displaced quest romances' (and at the same time 'displaced pastoral romances'), 'the archetypal monomyth of heroic adventure' which 'has been displaced — that is lowered, brought down to earth, rendered credible "scientifically"'; the critic then moves on to note that the form taken by this myth is always 'tripartite: first, the setting out, the disjunction from the familiar; second, the trials of initiation and adventure; and third, the return and the hero's reintegration into society'. The importance attributed to the moment of return is described as 'the magical feeling' arising 'from moving from a form of non-existence back to existence, or recovering one's normal self-consciousness before one's accustomed audience'. Fussell also notes that the tripartite structure has to hold even if there is no actual physical moment of return.

make one's name (fulfill one's 'calling') in that home world which still measures the traveller's values and achievements.

Under these constraints, translation becomes a requirement for the intelligibility of the text: even the traveller who has successfully learnt the language of the Other must now perform a re-translation into the code s/he shares with the home readership. The strategies adopted for this second level of translation are once again varied, and depend as well as act upon the type of text written and the conventions applying to it in the target (that is the home) culture. This is the level at which the implicit translation of travel writing and translation in general²⁸ operate most closely: both are influenced, though not in a mechanistic fashion, by the norms and expectations operating in the target culture, both actually belong, as texts and as processes, to that system, and potentially tell us as much about it as about the source culture and 'text' (which, in the case of foreign travel writing, is mostly identifiable with intercultural experiences, exchanges, dialogues, etc.).²⁹ This similarity of function is also reflected in a common range of choices. The travel writer, like the translator, can opt for maximum fluency and apparent transparency, thus operating what has become known as a 'domesticating' strategy, which tends to familiarize the foreign element and render it in terms immediately intelligible to the target (home) reader. At the other extreme, the writer (like the translator) can decide to resist the temptation to smooth

²⁸ The reference is to an intuitive notion of translation, which can be described as interlingual and as implying a move from a source to a target text perceived as a version of the first; though such a notion is highly debatable from a theoretical point of view, it can still function here as a 'common sense' definition; on the subject see T. Hermans, 'Translation and Normativity'.

²⁹ For this approach to translation see G. Toury, 'Translated Literature: System, Norm, Performance — Toward a TT-Oriented Approach to Literary Translation'; T. Hermans, 'Translation and Normativity'. The stress on target culture does not imply necessary resistance to innovation: norms can favour the introduction of new elements as well as oppose them. Yet even in the cases in which translation is most evidently used as an instrument of cultural change, the reasons for this emphasis are likely to be explained by phenomena characterizing the target culture (and, by implication, its relationship with the source culture). On a similar approach to travel writing as an indicator of the traveller's culture see T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, pp. 1-11 and pp. 208-13.

out the difference of the source 'text' and the subsequent 'difficulty' it presents to the reader; in this case the translation will adopt foreignizing strategies, opt for non-fluent solutions and highlight, rather than hide, the complex nature of the communication mechanisms described.³⁰ At this extreme of the spectrum the travel writer (like the translator) can choose not to translate words or passages which are either deemed highly culture-bound or suitably exotic. In practice, however, both the travel writer and the translator will have to at least part-translate,³¹ and it is possible to identify a large range of strategies available to them, varying from archaism, to pidgin, to the simplified or ungrammatical usage which is often associated with learners' variants of a language.³² Each strategy can be motivated by textual and ideological constraints, and convey different representations of the Other; besides, a single text may exploit a range of different translation strategies or stick to the same throughout. Susan Bassnett has examined the translation strategies adopted in the novels of Rider Haggard and the travel writings of Robert Byron, Redmond O'Hanlon and William Dalrymple, and exposed the way in which many of these can be downgrading or patronizing towards the represented Other: the mock medieval English dialogues in Haggard's *Allan Quatermaine*, or the broken pidgin passages in O'Hanlon's *Into the Heart of Borneo* are two representative examples of such

³⁰ For extensive discussion of the terminology used to describe these strategies see L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*; see also Chapter 2 above for a discussion of Venuti's ideas.

³¹ See below for a detailed discussion of the 'translation' from oral to written text operated by travel writing and of its implications. Here it is sufficient to note that even forms of travel reportage which use channels of communication different from the written text have to abide by the same rules: the orientalist painters of the nineteenth century and the illustrators of the discovery of the new world had to 'translate' what they saw in order to make it acceptable and meaningful for the European public. In similar fashion, contemporary photography frames the Other according to identifiable conventions, and even film and video reportages are edited and scripted in ways which will render their visual and verbal narrative comprehensible and at least reasonably acceptable to the target audience. A peculiar case is the one of cultures which share a common language: here, strictly speaking, the traveller may not need to translate, yet cultural and geographical elements may well require 'domestication'.

³² On learner's variants see *Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*, ed. by J. C. Richards (London: Longman, 1975) and S. P. Corder, *Error Analysis and Interlanguage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

devices at work and raise 'important questions about the transparency of the travel writer's representations of otherness through language'.³³ It is important to note, however, that the same strategy may be put to different uses by different writers and achieve different effects. So, for instance, the uses of untranslated English in Guido Gozzano's *Verso la cuna del Mondo: Lettere dall'India* (first published in 1917) and Antonio Tabucchi's *Notturmo indiano* (1984) not only diverge in purpose and effect, but also depend on opposite assumptions about the target reader.

Gozzano's portrayal of the European expatriates among whom he finds himself in colonial Bombay has one of its most ironic moments when he is told he will be taken to see a traditional Parsi funeral. While the writer is fascinated by the modernity and, as we would now say, the hybridity he can find in the everyday life of the city, his 'friends' insist that he should see the traditional India portrayed in books and illustrations. Parsi funerals are an integral element of that image, but there is a problem — nobody is dying:

Quest'oggi Lady Harvet, una signora attempata e bellissima, tutta bianca, vestito, volto, cappello, capelli, con non altro di colorito che gli occhi azzurri, entra nella sala di lettura del *Majestic Hotel*: —È morto! — È seguita dal figlio e dal dottor Faraglia, tutti esultanti: È morto!. È morto ieri sera, un Parsi di qualche importanza, l'architetto Donald-Antesca-Cabisa; i funebri saranno oggi, alle diciotto: siete fortunato; abbiamo il tempo di fare una gita sull'Esplanade e di salire alla collina di Malabar, per assistere alla cerimonia; faremo il *lunch* nel *Tower's Garden*; abbiamo le provviste con noi...³⁴

Here the use of easily recognizable English words, which have been italicized for extra effect, relies on the exotic and snobbish associations these would cause in an Italian reader for whom English would not, on the whole, sound familiar. The presence of this assumption

³³ S. Bassnett, 'When is a Translation Not a Translation?', in S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures*, pp. 25-40 p. 38.

³⁴ The edition used is G. Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo: Lettere dall'India*, ed. by Antonio Mor (Milan: Marzorati, 1971), p. 34.

is proved by the fact that less obvious expressions (such as the toponym 'Malabar Hill') are offered in Italian translation ('collina di Malabar'). The overall effect is to reinforce the comic bad taste of the scene, and the juxtaposition of 'cerimonia' to the italicized 'lunch' and 'Tower's Garden' in the last line stresses the absurdity of the English lady's insensitive and disrespectful transformation of a funeral into the occasion for a picnic.

Writing in the 1980's — at a time when English had achieved the unchallenged status of international language *par excellence*, and educated, travelling Italians could be relied upon to have a more than rudimentary familiarity with it — Antonio Tabucchi prefaces his Indian travelogue *Notturmo indiano* (of which he said that it is an insomnia and a travel)³⁵ with a page of virtually unbroken English:

Indice dei luoghi di questo libro

1. Khajuraho Hotel. Suklaji Street, senza numero, Bombay.
 2. Breach Candy Hospital. Bhulabai Desai Road, Bombay.
 3. Taj Mahal Inter-Continental Hotel. Gateway of India, Bombay.
 4. Railway's Retiring Rooms. Victoria Station, Central Railway, Bombay.
- Pernottamento con il biglietto ferroviario valido oppure con l'Indrail pass.
[...]³⁶

Here, hardly any translation is introduced, although phrases such as 'Railway's Retiring Rooms' would be far from transparent for a monolingual Italian.³⁷ Yet the declared intention of the list is to give useful co-ordinates to anyone who might use the book as a travel guide or companion. As used by Tabucchi, English is far from playing the distancing

³⁵ A. Tabucchi, *Notturmo indiano* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1984), p. 9.

³⁶ *Notturmo indiano*, p. 11; the list continues in the same vein.

³⁷ The phrase is also not in standard English, suggesting that Tabucchi is either using a local variant (thus reinforcing the realist credentials of the passage and proving its authenticity) or making up an English-sounding label (possibly in an effort to add credibility and prestige to the text, by claiming competence in a foreign language as well as local knowledge).

role it had in Gozzano's portrayal of colonial India; instead, it is presented as a perfectly acceptable medium of communication with the Italian reader of *Notturmo Indiano*, and thereby qualifies that reader as a world-wise, cosmopolitan, traveller and linguist, while also identifying the book itself as just as cosmopolitan and world-wise a product.

The different uses of English in Gozzano's and Tabucchi's passages highlight the fact that an analysis of the translation strategies adopted by travel writers cannot disregard the norms and expectations regulating the reception of the texts in the target culture. In Gozzano's case a foreignizing strategy is used to distance the narrator and his target readers from the colonial reality portrayed, while in Tabucchi's text a similar technique seems to indicate the opposite aim of identifying author and reader as possible (if not actual) participants in the foreign adventures narrated by the book. The implication of such an analysis is that no general assumptions can be made about the intentions or the effects of any specific strategy, and no value judgements can be attributed to different choices, without a careful consideration of the context in which they appear. The temptation to attribute positive values to disruptive, foreignizing techniques and, by contrast, to brand as negative the normalization operated by more fluent, transparent translations, has to be avoided in order not to impose an ideological, abstract model over the complex textual mechanisms at work in travel writing. The same could in fact be said of translation as such: in the work of Lawrence Venuti, for instance, the use of words such as 'foreignization' and 'domestication' in the context of what is mostly an American perspective, leads to the attribution of positive value to strategies such as the use of archaism, which make the work of the translator visible, and are even taken to imply a conscious resistance to the requirements of a dominant culture which, through translation, attempts to appropriate and

neutralize the foreignness of the imported text (and of the Other in the text).³⁸ Yet archaism, just like the use of untranslated phrases, can also indicate adherence to generic rules and stereotypes, as in the case of some orientalizing fiction and travel writing where the otherness and exoticism of foreign lands and people is conveyed, among other things, by the affected (and definitely not realistic) style of their speech.³⁹ This kind of observation should act as a warning towards too hasty an equation between a textual strategy, its objectives, and its actual effects on readers.

The role of the reader is also highlighted by Susan Bassnett's notion of 'collusion' in translation, that is the suspension of disbelief which allows us to take the text at surface value and, in the specific case of travel writing, to accept its various types of translation as a faithful reproduction of reality.⁴⁰ Focusing on collusion, however, should remind us of the constant possibility of different readings: reading too can be a strategic activity, and can be spoken of in terms of fluency and resistance; it is possible to imagine a reading which refuses to 'collude' with the text, to be fluent, to follow the strategies proposed by the writer (or the translator), and instead chooses to counter them, uncover them, track them down. The kind of critical reading operated by both Bassnett and Venuti (on travel books and translations respectively) is precisely such a resistant, non-collusive activity, but the ability to perform it should not be denied to the 'common reader' too. It is after all normal for readings which take place at different historical moments from the one in which the text was produced to follow, consciously or unconsciously, 'disruptive' patterns: thus

³⁸ See L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p. 310.

³⁹ For an example of such techniques see Susan Bassnett's analysis of the demeaning effect which this kind of stylistic device produces in the works of Rider Haggard, in 'When is a Translation Not a Translation?', pp. 36-38.

⁴⁰ Bassnett ('When is a Translation Not a Translation?', p. 39) uses the idea of collusion to call into question definitions of translation (or, rather, of what translation can be taken to mean at a given moment in history), highlighting how, as readers, 'we have been colluding with alternative notions of translation all our lives'.

Gozzano's defamiliarizing use of English in his portrayal of colonial India cannot be expected to affect the Italian readers of today in the same way in which it affected their counterparts at the beginning of the century — if it did, Tabucchi's *Notturmo Indiano* could not rely on the same strategy to achieve such a different effect.

The notion of collusion also raises, once again, the question of the authenticity, authority and validation of the text. As already noted, these are central and common issues for both translation and travel writing. In both cases a presumption of faithfulness lies at the core of the text: faithfulness to the original in the case of translations, faithfulness to reality in the case of travel writing. But, as with translations, so with travel accounts this faithfulness can only be a utopian (and deceptive) myth.⁴¹ An analysis of the translation strategies adopted by travel writers and of the conventions which regulate such textual practices highlights the illusory, mythical nature of the presumed faithfulness of travel writing to factual reality. In noting that such conventions encompass both the transparency of supposed or implied translation, and the use of a series of textual signs to mark its presence as visible (but fictitious), Susan Bassnett points to the deep connection between collusion with, and validation of, the text:

Authenticity, the truthful account by a traveller of what he or she sees, is presented as a fundamental element of travel writing. Readers are invited to share an experience that has actually happened. When we read a travel account, we do not expect to read a novel; rather we assume that the author will be documenting his or her experiences in another culture. But the dialogues are so often patently invented that authenticity begins to dissolve. We could say that one of the bases upon which travel writing rests, is the collusion of writer and reader in a notion of authenticity, that is the reader agrees to suspend disbelief and go along with the writer's pretence.⁴²

⁴¹ As Bassnett has remarked elsewhere, 'the discourse of faithfulness that has so dogged translation studies and from which we are finally beginning to emerge is also a dominant discourse in travel writing', and in fact 'travellers have pretensions towards faithfulness, insisting that we believe their accounts simply because they have been there and we have not' (*Comparative Literature*, p. 103).

⁴² Bassnett, 'When is a Translation Not a Translation?', p. 35.

The authenticity which is at stake in the 'translated' dialogues of travel writing is the one of the voice which speaks: whose voice does the reader actually hear? the one of the 'natives'? the one of the traveller, all the time? or perhaps only the one of the traveller-turned-writer? and what are the implications of these alternatives for the representation of the Other?

Similar preoccupations have been surfacing in recent self-reflective ethnographies and in critiques of this discipline and its practices, with particular attention to the role attributed to 'participant observation'. James Clifford has analysed the way in which the development of the discipline has defined and re-defined the issues of language and translation. Clifford points out that while 'arduous language learning' and 'some degree of direct involvement in conversation' are integral parts of the 'myth of fieldwork' as established during the first half of the twentieth century, in practice 'it was tacitly agreed that the new-style ethnographer, whose sojourn in the field seldom exceeded two years, and more frequently was much shorter, could efficiently "use" native languages without "mastering" them' — 'even though, [...] no one would credit a translation of Proust that was based on an equivalent knowledge of French'.⁴³ Clifford explicitly remarks on the way in which 'the growing prestige of the fieldworker-theorist downplayed (without eliminating) a number of processes and mediators', and 'the tasks of textual transcription and translation, along with the crucial dialogical role of interpreters and "privileged informants", were relegated to a secondary, sometimes even despised status' (p. 34). As a

⁴³ This was possible because the ideal model of the ethnographer encompassed both 'the describer-translator of custom and the builder of general theories about humanity'; in practice, the concentration on the description of small areas of culture from which to extrapolate a general theory justified a reductive view of the language problems involved in the process, so that two years or less were deemed sufficient in order to achieve the necessary language skills; J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Authority', in *The Predicament of Culture*, pp. 21-54; quotations are from p. 24, p. 30, p. 31, and p. 28 respectively.

result, in the ethnographic text, as in travel writing, the voice of the Other is elided not once but twice: first in ignoring or degrading the role of the interpreter, then in denying the difficulties involved in the process of translation and thus encouraging the assumption of a transparency of voices which actually belies the opacity of the text. The fiction of authenticity is maintained thanks to the authority of the ethnographer (or the traveller), which is sustained by a double claim: the experiential one of the witness ('I have been there, I have seen, heard, lived through it all'), and the scientific, or pseudo-scientific one of the expert (which in the case of the ethnographer is embodied in statements about personal knowledge and methodological rigour, while travellers tend to claim either past-experience or special individual skills and qualities to justify their privileged position).⁴⁴ In both cases, knowledge and experience are indispensable for the construction of an authoritative *persona* which, in turn, will sustain the claim of faithfulness and trustworthiness on which the writer's contract with the reader is based. But this monologic, individual authority is premised on the suppression of other voices and on the collusive fiction of a transparent text which faithfully reproduces reality. Even perceptive readers can be deceived by (or brought to collude with) the translation strategies of the text: just like Mary Louise Pratt, James Clifford is tricked by Shostak's *Nisa: The life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, with its rhetoric of transparency and personal involvement, into forgetting to mention translation

⁴⁴ Although the experiential claim tends to be predominant in travel writing and the scientific one in ethnographies, the two are never completely autonomous: it is customary for ethnographers to at least include a personal, autobiographical sketch at the beginning of their scientific monographs, and very often the same experience will also be the subject of separate narratives which tend to take the form of travelogues; hardly any travel book, on the other hand, is completely devoid of passages devoted to the 'objective' and 'learned' exposition of the history, geography, art or, indeed, anthropology of the places and people encountered. Pratt, 'Fieldwork in common places', traces these parallels between travel narratives and ethnographies in detail; on the subject see also Dennis Porter's observations on Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss, in *Haunted Journeys*, pp. 246-84.

among the transformations which Nisa's voice must have undergone in order to be accommodated on the page:

As alter ego, provoker, and editor of the discourse, Shostak makes a number of significant interventions. A good deal of cutting and rearranging transforms overlapping stories into "a life" that does not repeat itself unduly and that develops by recognizable steps and passages. Nisa's distinct voice emerges. But Shostak has systematically removed her own interventions (though they can often be sensed in Nisa's response). [...] Shostak has clearly thought carefully about the framing of her transcripts, and one cannot have everything — the performance with all its divagations, and also an easily understandable story. If Nisa's words were to be widely read, concessions had to be made to the requirements of biographical allegory, to a readership practised in the ethical interpretation of selves. By these formal means the book's second discourse, Nisa's spoken life, is brought close to its readers, becoming a narration that makes eloquent "human sense".⁴⁵

While captured by the illusion of transparency and the myth of faithfulness which hide the facts of linguistic translation in the depth of the text, Clifford however points to two further levels at which ethnographies operate some form of 'translation' or 'rewriting', that is the transposition of oral communication to the written page, and the inscription of an alien culture and its difference in terms which will be understood by the home public to whom the text is directed.

(iii) Orality and Textuality

The relationship between oral and written communication and their respective status underlie the entire analysis of the role of translation in travel writing as developed in the preceding pages: the same contract which binds the writer (and the translator) to the home

⁴⁵ Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', in *Writing Culture*, ed. by J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus, pp. 98-121 (p. 106).

reader and imposes the need to translate (and disguise) the foreignness of the languages in which exchanges originally took place, also imposes a series of constraints which belong to the conventional and normative nature of written texts in the home culture. In this sense it is possible to discuss the transposition of oral language into written text in terms of translation, or, at least, in terms of one of the many types of rewriting which form a continuum with it.⁴⁶

The manipulation operated by a transposition from speech to writing is a complex process, and should not be overlooked even when it is hidden by such easy labels as 'transcription'. As already noted, in the case of both travel writing and ethnographies the apparently simple process of 'transcription' usually hides a long list of operations — which notably include translation from one language to another. What Clifford's comments on the treatment reserved by Shostak for Nisa's words also highlight is the imposition of a narrative over 'reality', and the way in which this process is essentially linked to the conventions regulating readers' expectations. Such narrativizing is an unavoidable component of all types of story-telling, all language which attempts to move from

⁴⁶ According to André Lefevere 'the same basic process of rewriting is at work in translation, historiography, anthologization, criticism, and editing' as well as other activities such as 'adaptations for film and television'. What all these activities have in common is the manipulation of some sort of 'original' according to (though not necessarily in accordance with) the literary and ideological constraints operating in the system in which they are going to take up a place; all of them, besides, produce 'refractions' whose impact and life-span may often surpass those of the 'original' itself. Although not directly mentioned by Lefevere, transposition from oral to written form fits this definition of rewriting, as it both requires substantial manipulation and guarantees an afterlife, a survival and a new lease of meaning, to the 'original' utterances. It is then possible to talk of the travel writer, or the ethnographer, as a rewriter and — in a loose sense of the word, which is often encountered outside the specialist dominion of Translation Studies — as a translator. See *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p. 8-9, and p.4-5. On 'refraction' see André Lefevere, 'Literary Theory and Translated Literature', in *The Art and Science of Translation*, ed. by André Lefevere and Kenneth David Jackson, special issue of *Dispositio*, 7 (1982), 3-22; and André Lefevere, 'Mother Courage's Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature', *Modern Languages Studies*, 12 (1982), 3-20. Although the term 'rewriting' is more appropriate when referring to this kind of manipulation of language, the term 'translation' will sometimes be used in the discussion which follows due to its frequent appearance in the non-specialist texts on which the argumentation draws.

experience to representation.⁴⁷ But a narrative construction which moves from speech to writing presents further problems, since 'the reproduction of the performative aspects of an utterance — its physical, temporal and social contextuality — defies the translator's supposed task of reproducing meaning intact'.⁴⁸ Using the terminology of functional linguistics and discourse analysis, the move from speech to writing can be described as a change in the mode of communication which not only switches the channel of the message, but reinscribes it in a different context and alters its mechanisms of internal cohesion and coherence:⁴⁹ non-verbal components of the process of communication disappear, as do supra-segmental traits such as intonation and volume; markers of sequence and temporality as well as location and relative position need to be inserted; the identity of the speakers and their relationship to each other have to be signalled within the written text; in short all referential mechanisms need to be redefined in order to clarify the situation in which speech took place, the role of the participants, and other features of the reality surrounding them.⁵⁰ Failure to operate such shifts would result in serious loss of what, in speech act theory, has

⁴⁷ In this sense even the most realist of texts is a construction regulated by norms and conventions, as highlighted, for instance, by Hayden White's analysis of different types of historical writing, their choice of inclusions and exclusions, their use of narrative devices such as temporality, voice, development and closure; see H. White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', in *On Narrative*, ed. by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 1-24. See also the discussion of realist literature in Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), especially pp. 134-36.

⁴⁸ Kate Sturge, 'Translation Strategies in Ethnography', *The Translator*, 3.1 (April 1997), 21-38 (p. 22).

⁴⁹ For this terminology see M. A. K. Halliday and Ruqaya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976); M. A. K. Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994); applications of discourse analysis to the field of translation can be found in Roger T. Bell, *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice* (London and New York: Longman, 1991); Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London and New York: Longman, 1990); Basil Hatim and Ian Mason, *The Translator as Communicator* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1988).

⁵⁰ On reference in speech and writing see Paul Ricoeur, 'What Is a Text? Explanation and Interpretation', in David M. Rasmussen, *Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology: A Constructive Interpretation of the Thought of Paul Ricoeur* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 135-50.

become known as the illocutionary and perlocutionary meaning of utterances: their purpose and effect, that is our ability to do, and cause others to do, things with words.⁵¹

Travel writing is extremely rich in examples of such mechanisms at work. The following passage from Peter Matthiessen's *The Snow Leopard* is particularly relevant here because it also highlights how the 'translation' of speech into writing intersects other levels of translation already examined in this chapter:

The Lama of the Crystal Monastery appears to be a very happy man, and yet I wonder how he feels about his isolation in the silences of Tsakang, which he has not left in eight years now and, because of his legs, may never leave again. Since Jang-bu seems uncomfortable with the Lama or with himself or perhaps with us, I tell him not to inquire on this point if it seems to him impertinent, but after a moment Jang-bu does so. And this holy man of great directness and simplicity, big, white teeth shining, laughs out loud in an infectious way at Jang-bu's question. Indicating his twisted legs without a trace of self-pity or bitterness, as if they belong to all of us, he casts his arms wide to the sky and the snow mountain, the high sun and dancing sheep, and cries, "Of course I am happy here! It's wonderful! *Especially* when I have no choice!"⁵²

Here the play between the visibility of the interpreter and the transparency of the translation which 'transcribes' the Lama's response to the narrator's question is complicated by the narrative devices used to reproduce the communicative situation in which the whole exchange takes place. Paradoxically, the result of this complex intersection is the near disappearance of the dialogue itself: to avoid the cumbersome repetition which is involved in talking through the interpreter, we are only offered the question in the form of the narrator's own musings while contemplating (that is, describing to the reader) the old Lama; in the rest of the passage, the question is never asked as such, rather we are first informed of the remarks judiciously added by the narrator in relaying it to the interpreter,

⁵¹ On speech act theory see J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁵² P. Matthiessen, *The Snow Leopard* (London: Vintage, 1998; 1st edn 1978), p.225.

and then told that, after some hesitation, Jang-bu did actually translate it. This narrative device also has the effect of highlighting the Lama's response, which stands out as the only sample of direct speech in the passage. In between the two, a time gap is created by the insertion of an elaborate description which is meant to convey the non-verbal elements of the holy man's reactions and the feelings these create in the narrator himself. Some of the components of these responses are in fact so deeply embedded in the narrative to be virtually disguised as something else: the 'great directness and simplicity' of the Lama may appear as purely psychological clues to his character, but they also function as immediate references to his facial expression, tone of voice and general demeanour in answering the question. The only element of the passage which ultimately proves unruly, extremely difficult to control, is, significantly, the answer given by the Lama: in spite of the fluent transparency which relegates the translation process to a totally implicit level (not even signalled by an indirect reference to the interpreter), the oral quality of the direct speech proves elusive and Matthiessen has to resort to italics in order to convey the expressive value of the utterance. Yet the meaning of the Lama's words remains ambiguous and open to multiple readings: is his use of '*especially*' to be taken as a mark of resignation, perhaps even irony? or should it be seen as an index of the deep religiosity of the holy man, whose happiness defies Western logic?

Whatever our interpretation, 'transcription' is a very poor label for such a complex narrative rendition, which ultimately must make the passage intelligible, open up the possibility of interpretation, and thus inscribe a third participant, the reader, in the text. The stylistic devices used by Matthiessen, in fact, manipulate the reader in ways which are

typical of much travel writing.⁵³ Three elements are particularly evident in this passage: the uses of time, narrative voice and gaze. The insertion of descriptive 'pauses' between the various (implicit) phases of the exchange produces a mimetic illusion, and we have the sensation of a coincidence between the duration of the events and that of the physical act of reading. The use of the present tense achieves the result of strengthening the illusion of realism, yet it also confers a sense of timelessness or suspended temporality to the scene — a kind of eternal validity, comparable to the effect attributed to the use of the present tense in ethnographies (a device so pervasive to have become known as 'the ethnographic present').⁵⁴ Though apparently contradictory, these two uses of the present tense contribute to the general impression of an invitation for the reader to enter the scene described and become involved in the narration. Such a mimetic and participatory illusion is reinforced by the presence in the passage of a strong narrative voice, which interprets and rearranges the whole scene for the reader, inviting him/her to share experiences and sensations as perceived from a unified, central subjectivity ultimately posited as equivalent to his/her own. Additionally, the presence in the passage of a number of visual elements, all filtered through the powerful gaze of the narrator, gives the reader the impression of personally reconnoitring the scene, yet at the same time imposes a pivotal point of view which does not easily allow for alternative interpretations.⁵⁵ Time, voice and gaze ultimately co-operate in inviting identification with the persona of the narrator and with his experience of the

⁵³ See for instance the analyses of textual features of travel writing in M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*; M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*; T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*.

⁵⁴ On the 'ethnographic present' see in particular J. Fabian, *Time and the Other*; on the present tense as a realist device see Nélia Dias, 'Looking at Objects: Memory, Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Ethnographic Displays', in *Travellers' Tales*, ed. by G. Robertson and others, pp. 164-76.

⁵⁵ On the use of visual elements and a fixed vantage point in order to generate textual authority and identification on the part of the reader see Vincent Crapanzano, 'Hermes' Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description', in *Writing Culture*, ed. by J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus, pp. 51-76 (pp. 57-58).

events, people and places described, thus engaging the reader in what might be called a form of 'participant observation', and encouraging him/her to accept the truthfulness of the tale.

Through these and similar narrative devices, the 'translation' of speech into writing produces a text which will entice the home reader to whom it is addressed into a meeting with the Other mediated by the reassuring presence of the narrator and his/her subjectivity. But the illusion of realism on which the process rests needs to be defended against the possible accusation of distortions or lies produced precisely by the subjective nature of the 'translation'. Western culture (which represents the 'home culture' for the purposes of the present study)⁵⁶ is characterized by what Jacques Derrida has called a logocentric tradition which assigns primacy and preference to oral language, seen as the 'original' and the 'origin', of which writing can only be a copy, an illusory and possibly deceptive mimesis.⁵⁷ So in the movement from speech to writing the presumption of faithfulness to the original is once again revealed as an impossible and yet indispensable myth: this time a myth of origin which anchoring the 'transcription' to the spoken word validates it as real — or at least as a faithful copy of reality. Yet the necessary narrativization of the 'transcription' undermines this myth of faithfulness and only mimetic devices, such as the transparency (that is, the apparent absence) of the subjective translation, and the inscription of the reader within the text, can hold the fiction of realism together.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ See note 24 above for a qualification of the use of the expression 'Western culture'.

⁵⁷ See J. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs*, trans. by David B. Allison (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1973); J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), especially pp. 36-60; Derrida denounces phonocentrism or logocentrism and points out that the spoken word is in fact already a sign, and, as such, a form of representation rather than an event: there is, then, no pure origin, no escape into untampered, unrepresented reality. For a discussion of Derrida's theory of representation, orality and writing see Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, pp. 39-46.

⁵⁸ Terry Eagleton, for instance, remarks that part of the power of realist texts 'lies in their suppression of what might be called their modes of production, how they got to be what they are' (*Literary Theory*, p. 170).

This double requirement, which imposes on the written text the need to be subjective and objective at one and the same time, is not easily negotiated and often causes surprising results. Thus we even find ethnographers who are ready to claim that, unlike translators, they have to 'produce' their own text:

Like translation, ethnography is also a somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages — of cultures and societies. The ethnographer does not, however, translate texts the way the translator does. He must first produce them. Text metaphors for culture and society notwithstanding, the ethnographer has no primary and independent text that can be read and translated by others. No text survives him other than his own. Despite its frequent ahistorical — its synchronic — pretence, ethnography is historically determined by the moment of the ethnographer's encounter with whomever he is studying.⁵⁹

Such a denial of a pre-existing 'text' apparently contradicts the myth of faithfulness and origins, and ignores the requirements of mimesis. Far from being a candid recognition of the constructive and productive nature of all 'translation', however, Crapanzano's statement is a powerful assertion of the absolute authority of the ethnographer, an authority which is premised on notions of authorship as restricted to written texts only, and on the presumption of a superior status attributed to writing over speech in the Western literary and scientific traditions. If the logos represents the myth of the original, unmediated experience, the written text is the only one which is allowed to achieve permanence and the uneasy balancing of subjectivity and objectivity. The written text, in fact, can even stand for its author, survive and represent him/her, 'be read and translated by others'. As a

⁵⁹ V. Crapanzano, 'Hermes' Dilemma', p. 51. In an essay published in the same volume Talal Asad makes a similar, though marginally more cautious, statement in saying that 'the historian is *given a text* and the ethnographer has *to construct one*'; 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology', pp. 141-64 (p. 144); the italics are in the original. 'Constructing' is possibly a less autonomous and 'creative' image than the one of 'producing' used by Crapanzano, but the 'un-constructed' nature of the texts 'given' to historians or, indeed, of their own subsequent interpretations and re-constructions is hardly tenable.

consequence, such a text has both authority and ownership stamped all over itself: by effacing and denying its own processes of translation, it becomes an original, capable of being translated, but forever linked to the personal experience of its author, forever inscribed with his/her name.⁶⁰

The ambiguous relationship between speech and writing which is at the core of Western thinking about creation and representation, original and copy, thus ensures that while still anchored in the 'reality' of speech and experience, the ethnographer's (or the traveller's) text gains autonomy from, and authority over, that same reality: unlike the translator, the travel writer and the ethnographer have no fear of being brought to task by the presence of an original which could be invoked to test their authority and the truthfulness of their accounts. The necessary corollary of such a position, though, is that the Other, the observed, the travelee, must be denied the ability to write, to produce an alternative record, a mirroring text. How else could Crapanzano state that no text survives the ethnographer other than his own? If his experience is based on an encounter, then we ought to allow for the possibility of an account of it written from the point of view of the people he met. Yet, until very recently, ethnography has held on to the supposed uniqueness, to the un-reciprocity of its gaze, and, most of all, to the 'originality' of its 'translation' into writing of a "pure", unwritten oral/aural universe'.⁶¹ Today things are

⁶⁰ Walter J. Ong, in *Orality and Literacy*, has analysed the relationship between property, technology and the development of writing; see especially pp. 117-38.

⁶¹ J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', p. 118; on the subject see Derrida's critique of ethnography in *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), as well as Niranjana's discussion of the impact of such critique on translation theory (*Siting Translation*, pp. 66-86). The exclusion of the Other from the process of textual production has been so thorough and unchallenged that, although most ethnographies rest on information acquired through extensive dialogue with locals (and some may even claim to be faithful 'transcriptions' of their words), these are traditionally classified strictly as 'informants', not as authors or co-authors; the ethnographer's remains the sole name on the cover of the text, with all the personal, political and economic consequences this simple fact implies; and the affirmation of an essential difference between the position of the ethnographer and that of the translator is revealed as a powerful metaphor of authority. On the issue of authorship in ethnography see J.

partly changing, since it has become impossible to uphold the illusion of a neat divide between literate and illiterate cultures. Not only do the mechanisms of global communication ensure that virtually any text could become available for scrutiny to the people it portrays, but ethnography itself is no longer the exclusive province of Western (or Westernized) individuals, nor is the 'First World' excluded from the gaze of the ethnographer.⁶² Yet authority is not easily displaced, as noted by Talal Asad:

In the long run, [...], it is not the personal authority of the ethnographer, but the social authority of his ethnography that matters. And that authority is inscribed in the institutionalized forces of industrial capitalist society [...], which are constantly tending to push the meaning of various Third World societies in a single direction. This is not to say that there are no resistances to this tendency. But "resistance" in itself indicates the presence of a dominant force.⁶³

The case of travel writing is partly different: not all 'travelees' belong to societies which can easily be construed as 'primitive' and illiterate; and sometimes 'natives' do indeed protest their indignation at the way in which they have been portrayed. This situation is not a recent novelty either: it did arise in the past, as in the case of the famous polemic which pitted Giuseppe Baretti against Samuel Sharp, whose *Letters from Italy* (published in 1766) so incensed the Italian expatriate as to provoke him into writing his *Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768).⁶⁴ Yet even such examples can only confirm the fundamental assumption that travel writing is essentially directed to the home audience and posited on the identification between the point of view of the reader and the one of the

Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', in *Writing Culture*, ed. by J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus, pp. 1-26 (pp. 16-17).

⁶² See the eloquent analysis of the changes in the condition of ethnographic production offered by J. Clifford in 'On Ethnographic Allegory', pp. 116-119.

⁶³ Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation', p. 163.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 1 for a discussion of Baretti.

traveller/narrator. Having translated (and at least partially disguised) his/her dialogue with the Other, the travel writer initiates a new dialogue between himself/herself and the reader, and the written text assigns pride of place to this relationship, embodied (implicitly or explicitly) by the pronouns 'I' and 'you'; the Other is then transformed into an object (often the collective, undifferentiated 'them' of general descriptions and stereotypes) and is construed as neither the natural recipient nor the expected respondent of the text. In fact, by denying the presence of translation, the voice of the Other can be effaced altogether: instead of re-producing the powerful voice of an author, as translation does, travel writing posits itself as an authoritative representation of places and peoples, in which the Other does not necessarily have any voice (let alone any authority) and, if required, can even be reduced to the state of nature — simply an object for description rather than an interlocutor.⁶⁵ If s/he does write back, this Other has to do it in the language and on the home-ground of the travel writer, trying to re-instate his/her own individuality and to usurp his/her opponent's place in the dialogue with the readers — precisely as Baretti did in his response to Samuel Sharp.

What can take place, then, is a substitution of voices rather than a co-operation among them: in their narrative structure and authoritative stance Western travel texts traditionally remain essentially monologic and continue to rely on the balance of objectivity and subjectivity guaranteed by the assumption of the factual and autobiographical nature of the account.⁶⁶ Both travel writer and ethnographer are emphatically presented as the authors — rather than the translators — of their original, written texts. But the ambiguity between

⁶⁵ This is the case with much literature of discovery, where the opposition between natives and colonizers is frequently represented in terms of a parallel opposition between nature and civilization. On naturalization of the Other as a strategy of contemporary texts see for instance D. Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire*, pp. 156-69.

⁶⁶ Although it falls outside the scope of the present study, it would be interesting to examine the way in which post-colonial writers are breaking this model, both by writing from the so-called periphery in the languages of the centre, and by describing the centre itself as a location for the travels of tourists, exiles, immigrants or hybrid 'locals'.

the 'original' quality of speech and the 'authoritativeness' of writing means that, while not bound to be faithful to a separate (and potentially 'more authentic') source-text, travel writing and ethnography cannot rely upon its authority for validation either. They need to insist, as we have seen, on other sources and figures of authority, such as direct experience (embodied by the witness) and knowledge (in the person of the expert/scientist), which are conveyed by textual devices such as the uses of voice, gaze and time. Typically, the ethnographer asserts authority over an unwritten (oral, performed) exchange, which in Western cultures has no binding authorial status; unthreatened in his/her position as sole author of the text, the ethnographer can safely make himself/herself invisible as soon as the authenticity of the experience has been stated in a first chapter or introduction; from then on, his/her invisibility will become the condition for the deployment of a further type of authority: the one guaranteed by the 'objectivity' of science and the 'unbiased nature' of universalist hermeneutics.⁶⁷ The travel writer is in a similar position with regard to his/her 'object' and to the absence of an authoritative source text; but as a writer s/he has no direct and systematic access to the discourse of science, so s/he has to rely primarily on the authority conferred by experience and needs to remain visible, firmly sited at the centre of an autobiographical account which assumes the coincidence of author, narrator and protagonist, and invites the reader to identify with this central, monologic stance.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ V. Crapanzano ('Hermes' Dilemma', p. 53) discusses this fictitious invisibility of the ethnographer.

⁶⁸ See Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, p. 24 on the way in which the attribution of the narrator's function to a character who also performs the role of witness favours the identification of the reader with his/her point of view and attitude. It is important to note that talking of an 'autobiographical stance' does not imply the effective autobiographical nature of all travel narratives, nor does it require them to be written in the first person; the reference is rather to narrative devices and reader's expectations; on this subject see Philippe Lejeune, *Je est un autre: L'autobiographie de la littérature aux médias* (Paris: Seuil, 1980); and M. Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 106, for examples of travel texts characterized by a 'hidden' autobiographical account.

Just as in autobiography, however, the unity of these three voices in travel accounts is inevitably fictitious: as noted by Adrien Pasquali, in both genres 'Auteur/Narrateur/Personnage sont identiques mais fonctionnellement et textuellement distincts',⁶⁹ since there is always a difference between the narration and the narrative, between the subject who experiences and the one who narrates and thus re-constructs an image of the self as a character in a narrative. One of the features often shared by autobiography and travel writing is in fact the retrospective look, the sense of a personal archaeology which re-constructs an entire life 'à partir et en fonction du voyage' (p. 75). In this sense it is not surprising that the history of Western travel writing should be marked by the gradual emergence of the subject and the increasing dominance of his/her 'inward feeling';⁷⁰ nor that contemporary texts should openly stage the interior life of the protagonist as the central topic of the narration, so that 'au récit d'exploration d'un monde de moins en moins inconnu se substituerait le récit d'une expérience individuelle qui repose sur l'ambivalence entre l'évasion hors des contraintes d'un lieu de départ et la formation d'une nouvelle identité du sujet au contact du monde'.⁷¹ Manfred Pfister has examined the development of a 'modernist' travel writing, characterized by a sense of the crisis of the classic subject/object divide and of the related traditions of realism and romantic self-expression; as a result of this crisis the Victorian travelogue was transformed, at the beginning of the twentieth century, into a self-conscious literary genre, torn between the aspiration to create a whole and the awareness of its impossibility: the totalizing myth of the journey is then replaced by a constantly shifting representation of the self undertaking it —

⁶⁹ A. Pasquali, 'Récit de voyage et autobiographie', in *Annali d'italianistica*, 14 (1996), 71-88 (p. 72).

⁷⁰ The expression is used by M. B. Campbell in her discussion of Sir Walter Raleigh; Campbell's monograph traces this emergence of the subject in travel writing between 400 and 1600.

⁷¹ Pasquali, 'Récit de voyage et autobiographie', p. 73.

and if the modernist Byron never reaches Oxiana, the post-modernist Chatwin records a Patagonia which is essentially a construction, a fantasy of the West, made of writings of writings.⁷² If the interest of the narrative is shifted from an external to an internal journey, however, it becomes all the more essential that the reader should identify with the author/narrator/protagonist: for the (post)modern(ist) travel writer, who does not really have new worlds but only new insights to offer, it is more important than ever that we should 'feel with [him], be moved to want what he wants by seeing as he sees'.⁷³ Ultimately the autobiographical assumptions of travel writing, even in its most intimist versions, require what Philippe Lejeune has called 'le pacte autobiographique': a contract which stipulates the identity of protagonist, narrator and author and the factual nature of the narration, but also engages the reader in validating the text by identifying with its trinitarian and yet monologic voice. Like autobiography, travel writing is 'un mode de lecture autant qu'en type d'écriture, c'est un *effet contractuel* historiquement variable'.⁷⁴

A similar, and related, contract has to be achieved by travel writing in order to establish an apparently clear distinction between fact and fiction. One corollary of the 'pacte autobiographique' is that the author/narrator/protagonist is a real person, whose name appears on the book cover as a guarantee of authenticity. Travel writing additionally stipulates that this real person has been through one or more real journeys, visited real

⁷² Manfred Pfister, 'Robert Byron and the Modernization of Travel Writing', paper delivered at the *Fifth Warwick Seminar and Conference on British Cultural Studies: Britain Explored, Britons Exploring*, University of Warwick, 7-13 December 1997. Pfister also argues that the two options open to travel writing at the beginning of the twentieth century were either a greater focus on the literary and subjective elements of the text or a move towards the topical factuality of journalism. The first choice would lead to the risk of aestheticist, intimist writing (as in the works of Vernon Lee), the second to the production of journalistic reportage. Though he does not make the case for a clear separation of the two types of writing into different genres, Pfister excludes reportage from his analysis, and concentrates on the development of a modernist, self-conscious brand of travel writing. On modernist (and post-modernist) travel see also D. Porter, 'Modernism and the Dream of travel'.

⁷³ M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, p. 235; the observation refers to Sir Walter Raleigh.

⁷⁴ P. Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique* (Paris: Seuil, 1975); see in particular p. 26 and pp. 44-45; the quotation is from p. 45 (emphasis in the original).

places, met real people: if not the titles, at least the subtitles of travel accounts (or the blurbs on their back covers) make explicit reference to time and place co-ordinates, to names of places and dates of events which may reassure the reader about the factual nature of the journey. Traditionally, in fact, the more exotic and unknown the location, or the more extravagant the claims, the longer (the more 'narrative') the title, as in *The Discoverie of the large, rich and bewtiful Empire of Guiana, with a relation of the great and Golden Citie of Manoa (which the Spaniards call El Dorado), and of the Provinces of Emeria, Arromaia, Amapaia, and other Countries, with their Rivers, adioyning. Performed in the yeare 1595, by Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, Captaine of her Maiesties Guard, Lo. Warden of the Stammeries, and her Highenesse Lieutenant generall of the Countie of Cornewall.*⁷⁵

Despite such devices, the necessary narrativising effect of the written text, its 'translation' of contextual experience into a representation which can be read autonomously and retrospectively, in other places and at other times, insinuates the possibility of doubt and threatens the contract with the reader. If we cannot be told *all* the truth, how can we assume that we are being told the truth *at all*? The mechanisms of realist prose and those of intimist recollection, the displacement of translation and the effacement of alien voices, are set in place to encourage the suspension of disbelief, the collusion of the reader with the myth of a perfectly factual text in which reality could be contained and totalized without the help of fiction. Yet even a distinctly non-postmodernist critic such as Todorov has had to admit that such a neat separation of fact from fiction is at best an illusion, at worst a mystification. In his *Genres in Discourse*, Todorov strives to retain an essential, if minimal, difference

⁷⁵ This is the complete title of Raleigh's text as it was first published in London in 1596. See Campbell (*The Witness and the Other World*, pp. 230-31) for an analysis of the implicit narrativity of this title and of its validating function. It is significant that even 'impersonal', non-autobiographical guides share this type of accreditation mechanism: although the author(s) may be invisible in the body of the text, their credentials are often expanded upon in blurbs, introductions and other components of the para-text.

between 'fictional' genres and what he calls 'referential' and 'historical' ones (among which he counts both autobiography and, though less explicitly, travel writing);⁷⁶ and he further maintains that fictional texts such as the novel do not 'imitate' but 'create' reality (p. 39); yet the critic has to repeatedly admit that such differences do not hold once we take into account the act of reading. All texts lead the reader towards 'construction', and 'one does not construct "fiction" differently from "reality"'. The historian who studies written documents or the judge who depends upon oral testimony both reconstitute "the facts", and their procedures are in principle no different from those of the reader of *Armance*' (p. 48). Todorov questions the possibility of using objective criteria in order to ascertain literariness, and one of his examples is taken precisely from travel writing:

Is there a radical difference between a real account of a voyage and an imaginary travel narrative in terms of textual "systematicity" (considering that one is fictional and the other is not)? The focus on system, the attention paid to internal organization, do not imply that a given text is fictional. (pp. 8-9)

If intra-textual criteria are not sufficient to decide whether a text is or is not fictional, the question of authenticity and accountability can only arise as a function of the contract with the reader. When the text is read as 'literature' (that is, in Todorov's terms, as fiction) 'truth' is irrelevant, but once we stipulate its factual nature we need to believe in its 'faithfulness'. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility of a mystifying text which, at least for a while, manages to pass itself as factual while remaining strictly a product of imagination (as has been the case with many 'travel stories' and 'autobiographical

⁷⁶ Todorov, *Genres in Discourse*, p. 25 and pp. 8-9.

accounts', from *Mandeville's Travels* to *The Third Eye*):⁷⁷ as long as the contract is not called into question by the reader, the claim to autobiographical and factual authority holds.

In addition to these two, however, the travel writer has access to a third form of authority. Although deprived of the constraining but reliable presence of an 'original', s/he is granted the chance to exploit a different kind of source text: the permanence and potentially infinite productivity attributed to the written text by the Western notion of 'tradition', make it possible for him/her to invoke the voice of predecessors and to rely on their power to confer validation 'by proxy'. Hardly any travelogue fails to exploit the mechanisms of intertextual reference, either by directly quoting other travellers, or by using images such as 'following in someone else's tracks', 'retracing their steps', and so on. The function of such references is in fact twofold: on the one hand they add the testimony of other (prestigious) witnesses to the one of the present traveller/narrator; on the other they anchor the text deep into the tradition of the target (home) culture, thus establishing a common ground, a shared set of knowledge and values with the readers, and providing them with clues which will help them to both position the new text and interpret it.⁷⁸ As noted by Edward Said, this kind of intertextuality is highly authoritative and is posited on a 'textual attitude' which allows the travel writer to impose his/her interpretation of other cultures and even substitute it for reality.⁷⁹ Although highly productive and re-productive as

⁷⁷ See John Mandeville, *Mandeville's Travels*, ed. by P. Hamelius, 2 vols (Millwood, N. Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1974); T. Lobsang Rampa, *The Third Eye: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Lama* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1956). On apocryphal travel books and their claims see also S. Stewart, *Crimes of Writing*, pp. 31-65.

⁷⁸ In fact, reference to a particularly prestigious precursor often becomes a selling point, as in the case of the many volumes advertising themselves as re-enactments of famous journeys; see for instance Tim Severin, *Tracking Marco Polo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964) and Nicholas Rankin, *Dead Man's Chest: Travels After Robert Louis Stevenson* (London: Faber & Faber, 1987).

⁷⁹ Said writes: 'Travel books or guidebooks are about as "natural" a kind of text, as logical in their composition and in their use, as any book one can think of, precisely because of this human tendency to fall back on a text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity. Many travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country that it wasn't what they expected, meaning that it wasn't what a book said it would be. And of course many writers of travel books or guidebooks

a validation strategy, the kind of manoeuvre through which travel writers claim intertextual authority is, however, partly dangerous: the originality of the experience and of its account are at stake, and the writing of yet another travel book has to be justified by reasserting the at least partial distinctiveness of the latest enterprise. This can be achieved through a variety of devices: by stressing the novelty of material aspects of the journey, such as timing, exact location, mode of transport and travelling companions (or lack thereof); or by highlighting distinctive traits of the traveller/narrator, such as age, gender, motivation, personal objectives, and so on. Insistence on the figure and testimony of predecessors, on the other hand, can result in a sense of belatedness, of having come too late, which is characteristic of much modern travel writing, from Flaubert to Lévi-Strauss.⁸⁰ In this sense, the image of 'following in someone else's tracks' is exploited by travel writing in ways which are similar to its use as a metaphor for translation, where it can also carry a number of ambiguous connotations, ranging from appropriation of authority by proxy, to emulation of (and even competition with) a model, to slavish and futile imitation.⁸¹ Both in the case of translation and in that of travel writing, the sense and value attributed to the idea of 'following in someone else's tracks' will ultimately depend on the relative status of the figures and texts involved (the predecessor and the newcomer, the original and the translation) within the home culture: intertextuality is itself a component of that system, and intertextual references confirm the siting of travel writing firmly within its boundaries.

compose them in order to say that a country *is* like this, or better, that it is colorful, expensive, interesting, and so forth. The idea in either case is that people, places, experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes' (*Orientalism*, p. 93).

⁸⁰ On this subject see A. Behad, *Belated Travellers* and D. Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, especially p. 12, p. 183, and pp. 267-73.

⁸¹ On this topic see T. Hermans, 'Images of Translation'.

(iv) Cultural Translation

Many of the narrative devices described so far in this analysis of travel and translation — from the uses of voice, time and gaze in the ‘transcription’ of dialogue, to the exclusion of the travelee’s utterances from the written text, to the exploitation of autobiographic, factual and intertextual authority in order to ensure the stability of the contract with the reader — go far beyond the ‘rewriting’ of speech into written language and raise questions relating to the representation and interpretation of reality, the role attributed in these processes to subjectivity, and the definitions of ‘reality’ and ‘subject’ which underlie them. The final, all-encompassing ‘translation’ operated by travel writing is a pervasive act of representation and interpretation of the Other, aimed at making alien places and people first intelligible and then familiar to the home culture and reader.⁸² This attribution of meaning to difference is often spoken of in terms of translation, and can be assimilated to what ethnographers have called ‘cultural translation’:⁸³ the transfer and inscription of an entire cultural and social reality and its ‘modes of thought’ in the terms (and language) of another. This transfer is premised on a notion of culture as text: a set of practices which can be read and interpreted in hermeneutic fashion by a suitably equipped and sensitive individual. But ‘cultural translation’ is also anchored to the assumption of the existence of a further set of

⁸² In this sense, as remarked by Tim Youngs (*Travellers in Africa*, p. 3), ‘travel writers are at once establishing their cultural affinities with, and spatial, experiential difference from, their readers. Travel writing, especially in an imperial or colonial context, is an expression of identity based on sameness to and yet remoteness from the members of the home society’.

⁸³ See Asad, ‘The Concept of Cultural Translation’, for the history and origins of this notion as well as an in depth critique of its assumptions. On the same subject see also Clifford (‘On Ethnographic Authority’), who attributes the dominance of the idea of cultural translation to the prestige of ‘interpretive ethnography’; the by now classic example of this ethnographic mode is Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973). For a Translation Studies perspective on the notion and practices of ‘cultural translation’ see K. Sturge, ‘Translation Strategies in Ethnography’, and Ovidio Carbonell, ‘The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation’, in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, ed. by R. Alvarez and M. C.-A. Vidal, pp. 79-98. A detailed discussion of the importance of Asad’s article and of the concept of cultural translation for the development of Translation Studies can be found in D. Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, pp. 42-45.

readers who may benefit (often also in material ways) from an understanding of that culture. The experience of the reader of ethnographies is then a reading of a reading, the interpretation of a text which has already been produced via an interpretation; and the process, as we have seen, may entail even further layers of signification, since it may well involve the participation of 'interpreters' and be based, ultimately on the 'informant's' own interpretation of the practices described. While it includes multiple levels of linguistic decoding and re-encoding, then, 'cultural translation' is not limited to them. Rather it involves what has been described as the process of extracting 'implicit meaning' from the verbal as well as the non verbal signs of a culture via a hermeneutic process carried out by an observer whose ultimate goal is to represent that culture to a different audience: the home readers, for whom the written text is produced and who will ultimately determine its success or failure.⁸⁴ The writer may explicitly share the values and standards of this target audience, or reject them in favour of the ones embodied in his/her interpretation of the other culture (and many intermediate positions are possible). S/he may conceive of herself/himself as a mere outsider whose identity remains untouched by contact with the Other, or as a participant observer who is rather more amenable to personal involvement and change. But as long as s/he continues to construct himself/herself as an *author* writing for a familiar *home reader*, the division between Self and Other is not really called into question. The similarities with Western travel writing are evident, but can we really call

⁸⁴ The process through which the ethnographer extracts and constructs 'implicit meaning' is compared by Asad to the Freudian model of analysis; a similar psychoanalytical view (though formulated in Lacanian terms) is offered by Barry Curtis and Claire Pajaczkowska in their analysis of the mediation of reality operated by language in the experience of travel: 'Perhaps the most conspicuous mediation is travel writing — the retrospective reconstruction of experience in epistolary or journal form, often addressed to an absent interlocutor and thereby acknowledging the necessary experience of absence or lack on which the entry into language is predicated' ("Getting There": Travel, Time and Narrative', p. 207)

such a process 'translation' and discuss it in terms which would be familiar to Translation Studies?

It would seem possible to discuss 'cultural translation' as a complex process including all the types of translation proposed by Roman Jakobson in his famous essay 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation':⁸⁵ intralingual translation is present in the wording and rewording of experience often undertaken by 'informants'; interlingual translation, as already noted, has multiple places of entry into the procedure; and intersemiotic translation is also necessary, in the process of verbalization of non verbal cultural practices and settings carried out by both informants and observers.

An even more comprehensive notion of translation is the one proposed by George Steiner in the first chapter of *After Babel*, 'Understanding as Translation'.⁸⁶ Steiner defines 'interpretation' as 'that which gives language life beyond the moment and place of immediate utterance or transcription', and on this basis proceeds to include all diachronic communication and all reading in the idea of translation (p. 28).⁸⁷ Steiner's definition of translation is gradually enlarged, until it encompasses all communication:

Any model of communication is at the same time a model of translation, of a vertical or horizontal transfer of significance. No two historical epochs, no two social classes, no two localities use words and syntax to signify exactly the same things, to send identical signals of valuation and interference. Neither do two human beings. (p. 47)

⁸⁵ Now in *Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*, ed. by Rainer Schulte and John Biguenet (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 144-51.

⁸⁶ Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992; 1st edn 1975; pp. 1-50.

⁸⁷ Steiner explicitly makes the comparison between interlingual translation and intralingual processes of interpretation: 'When we read or hear any language statement from the past, be it Leviticus or last year's best-seller, we translate. Reader, actor, editor are translators of language out of time. The schematic model of translation is one in which a message from a source-language passes into a receptor-language via a transformational process. The barrier is the obvious fact that one language differs from the other, that an interpretive transfer, sometimes, albeit misleadingly, described as encoding and decoding, must occur so that the message "gets through". Exactly the same model [...] is operative within a single language. But here the barrier or distance between source and receptor is time' (pp. 28-29).

Unsurprisingly for a humanist such as Steiner, the argument ends in the contraposition of individual idiolect — the seal of subjectivity — to the ‘statistically-based fiction’ of ‘a normal or standard idiom’ (p. 47).⁸⁸

Steiner’s definition would certainly include all aspects of ‘cultural translation’, yet it is problematic both for its subjectivist assumptions and for its possible lack of productivity: if we define all language as ultimately an individual idiolect, how can we expect to talk of translating entire cultures? and if all communication is translation, how can we retain an operative notion of ‘translation’? how can we analyse such pervasive processes and their multifarious effects? Tejaswini Niranjana has pointed out that Steiner is more concerned with an idealized image of translation as ‘dialogue’, or ‘a balance between I and thou’ than he is with a real world in which inequalities and asymmetries of power make the idea of ‘exchange without loss’ distinctly utopian.⁸⁹ Steiner is extremely sensitive to difference as an element of subjectivity and textuality, but not necessarily to the power relationships which are both constitutive of, and constituted by, difference; for him, the individual is the ultimate marker and judge of difference:

Each ‘differing from’ is diacritical in a generalized formal, historical sense but also inexhaustibly specific. [...] To experience difference, to feel the characteristic resistance and ‘materiality’ of that which differs, is to re-experience identity. One’s own space is mapped by what lies outside; it derives coherence, tactile configuration, from the

⁸⁸ Although he re-introduces restrictive notions of translation ‘in the full sense of the word’ (p. 48), or ‘properly understood’ (p. 49), Steiner never abandons his more comprehensive definition — in fact his preface to the second edition of the book possibly widens its boundaries even further: ‘*After Babel* postulates that translation is formally and pragmatically implicit in every act of communication, in the emission and reception of every mode of meaning, be it in the widest semiotic sense or in more specifically verbal exchanges. To understand is to decipher. To hear significance is to translate’ (p. xii).

⁸⁹ Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 59 and p. 68; Sherry Simon makes parallel criticisms of Steiner from a feminist point of view (*Gender in Translation*, pp. 28-29 and p. 144), characterizing his apparent universalism as violently (and graphically) appropriatory.

pressure of the external. 'Otherness', particularly when it has the wealth and penetration of language, compels 'presentness' to stand clear.

Working at the point of maximal exposure to embodied difference, the translator is forced to realize, to make visible, the perimeters, either spacious or confined, of his own tongue, of his own culture, of his own reserves of sensibility and intellect. (pp. 381-82)

Behind this stance there is a strong sense of the primacy of the individual subject and of 'culture' in the humanist sense of a universal tradition which even difference (in language, nationality, historical collocation) cannot dislodge.⁹⁰ An example of this attitude can be found in the already quoted observation that time operates as a barrier and a marker of distance: this line of thought leads Steiner to comment that we know the past only through mechanisms of translation, as a 'verbal construct', achieved through 'a selective use of the past tense' (p. 30); it is 'the past tenses, in their bewildering variousness, which constitute history' as a set of 'geographies of remembrance' (p. xiv). For Steiner, however, this constructed past is still the bearer of a progressive tradition seen as the heart of a universal 'literate culture' which he assumes as common to himself and his readers.⁹¹ There is no trace in Steiner's argument of those uses of the past which can help discriminate between the 'advanced' and the 'primitive' by describing entire societies as trapped at the beginning of civilization, by purporting to offer Western man his own past in a distorted mirror, and thus justifying a hierarchy of exploitation. This is a use of the past (as tense and as memory) which is shared by travel writing and ethnography: even apparently innocent pastoral and archaeological views of Others (which have been shown to be at work in Orientalism, primitivism and further forms of 'othering' frequently encountered in travel writing) imply similar relationships of power, since they favour both nostalgia and stereotype, two

⁹⁰ Similar criticisms of Steiner are expressed by Samia Mehrez, 'Translation and the Postcolonial Experience: The Francophone North African Text', in *Rethinking Translation*, ed. by L. Venuti, pp. 120-38.

⁹¹ See for instance p. 459 and pp. 486-95.

mechanisms which tend to freeze the representation of the Other into static, generic images, to transform their societies into 'culture gardens', and to reinforce the barrier which separates 'us' from 'them' by establishing what Johannes Fabian called 'the denial of coevalness'.⁹²

Steiner's universalist and idealist definition of all communication as translation, needs to be replaced by a notion which stresses the culture-bound nature of translation and of its operations in contexts which are often characterized by unequal relationships of power between source and target culture. The question is not so much whether we can define what translation is (its universal, formal components) but what it does (its functions in specific historical contexts, at given times and in given places), and how it operates (what norms and values inform it). In examining the relevance of the notion of 'cultural translation' for Translation Studies, Theo Hermans has noted that it is difficult to 'see how translation can be avoided in the context of cross-cultural understanding, especially if researchers have to report back on their fieldwork to their own communities'.⁹³ Faced with difference 'we construe commensurability by translating on and into our terms', which are 'not neutral but conditioned', and 'not merely a matter of linguistic equivalence'.⁹⁴ Theo Hermans's definition of translation stretches to include conceptual transpositions and descriptions, seen as forms of representation across semiotic boundaries and compared to Jakobson's intersemiotic transmutation.⁹⁵ But he does not lose sight of the historicized,

⁹² On the connection between the uses of time and travel writing (as well as anthropology) see J. Fabian, *Time and the Other*; M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*; B. Curtis and C. Pajaczkowska, "'Getting There": Travel, Time and Narrative'. On the 'archaeological' eye see E. Said, *Orientalism*; on the uses of the pastoral model see P. Fussell, *Abroad* (pp. 209-10); J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory'; and the seminal work of William Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1950), and Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁹³ Hermans, 'Translation and Normativity'.

⁹⁴ 'Translation and Normativity'.

⁹⁵ See Hermans, 'The Production and Reproduction of Translation'.

sited and overdetermined nature of translation processes: 'If translation, [...], cannot be written out of cross-cultural understanding and description, then it matters that translation is governed by, and saturated with, norms and values'.⁹⁶ Herman's extended definition of translation can be productive because it refers us back to a notion of culture as a system of norms and expectations which will enable us to examine 'cultural translation' contextually and to refer its practices to the specific constraints operating on each of its individual occurrences.⁹⁷

A further indication of the acceptability and productivity of a notion of translation which includes 'cultural translation' comes from Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere in their discussion of analogy. Analogy is described as 'the most obvious form of negotiation' between the different textual and conceptual grids which, in each culture, regulate the production and reception of cultural capital, but also as the one which 'leads, inevitably, to the obliteration of differences between cultures and the texts they produce'.⁹⁸ Analogy is 'the easy way in negotiations between cultures, [...] because it slants the culture of origin toward the receiving culture, *whose prestige is perceived to be so much greater*' (p. 11; my italics). In this analysis, the analogic process is not perceived as the 'natural' way in which to make difference intelligible, as a question of possible or impossible equivalence between two texts (or linguistic expressions), but as an appropriative technique posited on an unequal relationship between source and target culture. It is this relationship which

⁹⁶ 'Translation and Normativity'.

⁹⁷ Hermans bases his ideas on the systemic nature of culture and its relationship to individual action on the theories of Niklas Luhman and Pierre Bourdieu; similar ideas and references can also be found in A. Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, and S. Bassnett and A. Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures*; all of these authors share a notion of system which is both dynamic and anti-mechanistic; this conception differs substantially from formalist and structuralist notions such as those proposed by Lotman and Uspensky, which formed the basis of Polysystem theory at the time of its formulation by Even-Zohar and Toury, in the 1970s and 1980s. For a discussion of Polysystem Theory see Chapter 2.

⁹⁸ Bassnett and Lefevere, 'Introduction: Where are We in Translation Studies?', p. 7.

authorizes (that is, confers authority to) the interpretive and representational practices of cultural translation, and at the same time marks them as asymmetrical, slanted, 'unfaithful'. The device of analogy and its mirroring double, contrast, are revealed as both typical mechanism and excellent metaphors of the appropriative, domesticating power of any translation of Otherness in the terms and language of the Self, of its ability to obliterate difference in its more unsettling and interrogating forms.⁹⁹

If we can, then, accept that 'cultural translation' is a form of translation, we also have to reverse the formula and state that all translation is 'cultural translation'. But in doing so we should not simply accept the hermeneutic metaphor of culture as text (a reality already given and awaiting interpretation); rather we should be aware of the impositions of meaning and values, the appropriations and the rewritings at play in each process of representation of one culture in the terms of another, whether these are operated by analogy, contrast or other textual mechanisms:¹⁰⁰ since a translation is always 'addressed to a very specific audience which is waiting to read about another mode of life and to manipulate the text it reads according to established rules, not to learn to live a new mode of life', the question raised is one of 'different uses (practices), as opposed merely to different writings and readings (meanings)'.¹⁰¹ This entails the recognition that while cultural translation (like

⁹⁹ James Clifford deals with similar processes in his discussion of what he calls 'ethnographic allegory' which he links to the presupposition of 'an abstract plane of similarity' to which the narrative of specific differences can always make reference, a sort of transcendent *tertium comparationis*; given that such a presupposition is necessarily illusory, the process of allegorical interpretation and representation comes to resemble quite closely that of appropriation by analogic assimilation to one's own specific (that is historically and culturally determined) knowledge; see J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Allegory', pp. 98-121 (p. 101).

¹⁰⁰ Edward Said points out the importance of the textual and discursive strategies of Orientalism in terms which could easily be extended to other cases of 'cultural translation': 'Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-à-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kind of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text — all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally, representing it or speaking on its behalf' (*Orientalism*, p. 20).

¹⁰¹ Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation', pp. 159-60. It should be noted that Talal Asad's observation is limited to the process of cultural translation in the field of ethnography, but the argumentation followed in the last few pages of this chapter justifies its extension to other areas of translation.

all translation) is a fact of the target culture, it is also eminently not just that. Venuti's description of the double-edged power of translation, which 'constructs a domestic representation for a foreign text and culture' and 'simultaneously constructs a domestic subject, a position of intelligibility that is also an ideological position, shaped by the codes and canons, interests and agendas of certain domestic social groups',¹⁰² needs to be supplemented to show how the images created by translation also talk (and act) back, informing and justifying practices and attitudes which directly and indirectly affect the source culture, in an often ominous return of the represented which may well also affect the self-image of the Other, at least if s/he is perceived and constructed (internally or externally) as weaker and more peripheral than its counterpart. Talal Asad makes this point quite clear in the context of the writing up of oral/aural cultures operated by ethnography, noting that 'in modern and modernizing societies, inscribed records have a greater power to shape, to reform, selves and institutions, than folk memories do. They even construct folk memories'.¹⁰³ But similar examples also abound outside colonial contexts and ethnographic representations, as in the case of the nineteenth-century creation and translation of Finnish 'epics' on which Lefevere bases his in-depth analysis of the complex power of analogy — a power which works 'in both directions':

Since the dominant concept of 'world literature' of his time demanded that all national literatures should begin with epics, Lönnrot did what he could to oblige within the context of Finnish language and culture, by creating a passable analogue. Conversely, where that analogue was thought to be wanting, the dominant concept of 'world literature' would make it resemble even more what it wanted.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² L. Venuti, 'Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities', p. 10.

¹⁰³ Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation', p. 163.

¹⁰⁴ A. Lefevere, 'The Gates of Analogy: The Kalevala in English', in Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures*, pp. 76-89 (p. 82).

Not only did a domesticated image of the Finnish national literature end up representing it for an English audience, but the construction of that national literature by and for a home audience was itself affected by processes of cultural translation and by the self-perception of one culture with regard to the one(s) it regarded as stronger than itself.

What Asad's and Lefevere's very different examples show is that translation is also patently a fact of the source culture. Its processes are not only one-directional, though the forces which operate in the two senses may well be (and usually are) unequal; yet they are not 'simply' bi-directional either, since the mechanisms of identity construction of which (cultural) translation is part are not 'simply' relational.¹⁰⁵ The politics of identity cannot be described by a 'simple' set of structural oppositions between Self and Other, insider and outsider, and so on; nor is a simplified Lacanian model of mirroring, desire and repression sufficient to explain its complexities.¹⁰⁶ The mirroring does not stop after the first act of representation, nor do its distortions: through translation (and other agents of 'cultural translation', such as ethnography and travel writing) the refractions continue to bounce back across the boundaries of Self and Other, constantly modifying the perception and construction of both images, and constantly altering their reciprocal practices, in ways which are systematically infiltrated by power:

[...] identity is a construction; a consequence of a process of interaction between people, institutions and practices. Moreover, because the range of human behaviour is so wide,

¹⁰⁵ The one-directionality of translation is maintained, for instance, by T. Hermans, 'Translation and Normativity'; a 'two-way force' is advocated by O. Carbonell, 'The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation', p. 93.

¹⁰⁶ See in particular 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I' and 'The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis', both in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977). Lacan's conception of identity formation is neither rigid nor schematic, but many of its interpretations and applications in theories of cultural identity tend to be. On desire as a motor for travel see D. Porter, *Haunted Journeys*; S. Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*; and M. B. Campbell, 'Renaissance Voyage Literature and Ethnographic Pleasure: The Case of André Thevet', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 1 (Spring 1997), pp. 9-42.

groups maintain boundaries to limit the type of behaviour within a defined cultural territory. Boundaries are an important point of reference for those participating in any system. Boundaries may refer to, or consist of, geographical areas, political or religious viewpoints, occupational categories, linguistic and cultural traditions.¹⁰⁷

Boundaries, however, are always shifting, and it is activities such as translation and travel writing, activities which set in motion processes of 'cultural translation' and their multiple refractions, which both mark those boundaries and constantly re-shape them, in a process which can be both reassuring and unsettling.¹⁰⁸ Thus, while representation, the translation of the Other into familiar terms, is not an innocent academic or aesthetic pursuit, it need not necessarily collude with power all the time, nor pay constant homage to conservative images of the Self/Other opposition. If the traveller is a translator of cultures which are always dynamic, constantly changing in ways which already include processes of translation and textualization with their networks of uneven forces and practices, then the travel writer is 'a translator's translator':

The source keeps on shifting. It is It that travels. It is also I who carry a few fragments of it. Translations mark the continuation of the original culture's life. As has been repeatedly proven, the hallmark of bad translation is to be found in the inability to go beyond the mere imparting of information or the transmittal of subject matter. To strive for likeness to the original — which is ultimately an impossible task — is to forget that for something to live on, it has to be transformed. [...]

What can a return to the original be, indeed, when the original is always already somewhere other than where it is thought to be; when 'stay home' also means 'reach out', and native cultures themselves are constantly subject to intrinsic forms of translation?¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Madan Sarup, 'Home and Identity', p. 102.

¹⁰⁸ Sarup explicitly makes this point: 'On the one hand, it is interesting to leave one's homeland in order to enter the culture of others but, on the other hand, this move is undertaken only to return to oneself and one's home, to judge or laugh at one's peculiarities and limitations. In other words, the foreigner becomes the figure on to which the penetrating, ironical mind of the philosopher is delegated — his double, his mask' ('Home and Identity', p. 100).

¹⁰⁹ Trinh T. Minh-ha, 'Other than Myself/My Other Self', in *Travellers' Tales*, ed. by G. Robertson and others, pp. 9-26 (p. 18).

In Trinh Minh-ha's image of the traveller's tales, the reference to Walter Benjamin's vision of translation as afterlife stresses that the price for a 'good' cultural translation is the abolition of the myth of faithfulness.¹¹⁰ The travel writer has no way of being faithful since multiple layers of interpretation and representation are always present in his/her accounts — in fact, they are also always already there in the reality s/he describes. As with translation, we should then accept the necessary rewritings and manipulations operated by travel writing, and start looking carefully at what they actually do: if a representation of the Other and a translation of his/her voice are inevitable, we should make sure that they do not go undetected, and that the specific forms they take are studied and connected with their effects in terms of the target culture's reception of the text, of its representation of the Other, and of its subsequent 'actions' and 're-actions' in both target and source culture. Cultural translation ought to become the object of conscious critical practices, whether it is embodied in ethnography, translation or travel writing.¹¹¹

It might even be possible, then, to discover ways in which travel writers (like, or as, translators) can 'try to overcome, or bypass the kiss of death bestowed by acculturation through analogy';¹¹² ways in which they might relinquish their absolute authority over the text (and the Other in the text) and yet not lose the chance to communicate with their

¹¹⁰ See W. Benjamin, 'The Task of the Translator'.

¹¹¹ Susan Bassnett has called for a similar stance: 'Map-making, travelling and translating are not transparent activities, they are very definitely located activities, with points of origin, points of departure and destinations. [...] The time has come not only for us to compare accounts by travellers, but to question the premises on which those accounts were written in the first place' (*Comparative Literature*, p. 114). Elsewhere, Bassnett and Lefevere extend this call for systematic attention to all types of 'rewriting': 'The more the socialization process depends on rewritings, the more the image of one culture is constructed for another by translations, the more important it becomes to know how the process of rewriting develops, and what kind of rewritings/translations are produced. Why are certain texts rewritten/translated and not others? How are the techniques of translating used in the service of a given agenda? Rewriters and translators are the people who really construct cultures on the basic level in our day and age. It is as simple and as monumental as that. And because it is so simple and yet so monumental, it is also transparent: it tends to be overlooked' ('Introduction — Where are We in Translation Studies?', p. 10).

¹¹² Bassnett and Lefevere, 'Introduction — Where are We in Translation Studies?', p. 11.

readers. Far from denying that travel writing is produced in settings 'deeply inscribed with the politics, the considerations, the positions and the strategies of power',¹¹³ one might look for ways in which the acknowledgement of these constraints can lead to avoid the 'rhetoric of otherness' which informs most of the Western tradition in favour of a less appropriative and dominative modes of knowledge.¹¹⁴ Is it possible, for instance, for travel writing not to transform others into a generic Other, individuals into types? To admit the voices of others to the text without denying them a subjectivity reserved to the traveller/writer and his/her alter ego, the home reader?

James Clifford has tried to locate such alternative possibilities in ethnographic writing, exploring texts which display traces of what he calls 'dialogic' and 'polyphonic' authority. Basing his analysis on Bakhtin's notions of dialogism and heteroglossia, Clifford states that 'once dialogism and polyphony are recognized as modes of textual production, monophonic authority is questioned, revealed to be the characteristic of a science that has claimed to *represent* cultures'.¹¹⁵ Yet these alternative forms of authority do not offer a guarantee against the unequal weighing of voices in the text: 'however monological, dialogical or polyphonic their form, [ethnographies] remain hierarchical arrangements of discourses' (p. 17). Dialogical texts cannot avoid 'the inescapable fact of textualization' which means that they 'remain *representations* of dialogue', and even quotations of multiple voices cannot achieve effective polyphony, since 'quotations are always staged by the quoter'.¹¹⁶ Yet Clifford attempts to assert the possibility of 'dialogical portrayals' which would be able to 'resist the pull toward authoritative representation of the other' thanks to

¹¹³ Edward Said, 'Orientalism Reconsidered', *Race & Class*, 27.2 (Autumn 1985), pp. 1-15 (p. 2).

¹¹⁴ The 'rhetoric of otherness' is discussed by F. Hartog in *The Mirror of Herodotus*, pp. 212-59.

¹¹⁵ J. Clifford, 'Introduction: Partial Truths', p. 15. Bakhtin's fundamental text for a discussion of dialogism and heteroglossia is 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 259-422.

¹¹⁶ J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Authority', p. 43 and p. 50 respectively.

'their ability fictionally to maintain the strangeness of the other voice and to hold in view the specific contingencies of the exchange' (p. 44). In similar fashion, he suggests that 'one might imagine a more radical polyphony that would "do the natives and the ethnographer in different voices"' (p. 50), and if this, too, were to prove only a displacement of ethnographic authority, then one might resort to extensive transcription: 'if accorded an autonomous textual space, transcribed at sufficient length, indigenous statements make sense in terms different from those of the arranging ethnographer. Ethnography is invaded by heteroglossia' (p. 51). The untenable nature of such solutions becomes clear once we reintroduce the notion of translation — which significantly remains absent (or rather, transparent) in Clifford's discussion of dialogic and polyphonic authority. Any attempt at dialogism or polyphony, as described by Clifford, is still shot through with the multiple layers of translation which have been highlighted in the previous pages. Clifford struggles to maintain the possibility of reproducing the 'real', unmediated and authoritative voice of the Other and his/her culture. But is 'portraying' not representing? That voice and that culture are in fact necessarily subjected to multiple processes of translation in order to be transferred into the language of the ethnographer (or the travel writer) and to be incorporated into his/her writing.¹¹⁷ The text cannot achieve the transparency of multiple voices present to themselves in dialogue. In fact striving for such a transparency might constitute yet a different re-enactment of the myth of faithfulness, of the mystifying truth of realist representation theories.

¹¹⁷ The possibility of self-translation, that is of a native speaker who already expresses himself/herself in the language of the traveller or the ethnographer does not, as we have seen, modify this picture. The rise of English as an international language, and the growing polylinguism not just of individuals but of entire cultures might introduce new opportunities, but the power relations established by the status of English as a post-colonial and/or neo-colonial language, and by its association with the globalization imposed by neo-capitalism are hard to dismiss.

Yet for Bakhtin dialogism and heteroglossia do not represent a soothing, pacifying harmony among equally powerful and central voices. On the contrary, they signal the constant struggle of dissonant voices, the mixture of centrifugal and centripetal forces which constantly strive to achieve (or to avoid) the monoglossia of unitary language. Such a dynamic is not a linguistic abstraction, but an enactment of social inequalities and power struggles:

Thus a unitary language gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the processes of sociopolitical and cultural centralization.¹¹⁸

Cultural translation can take this notion of heteroglossia into account, though not through the deployment of yet more textual mechanisms, nor in vain attempts to avoid representation through the substitution of one kind of narrative with another. If the text can only *represent* dialogue, it can however open itself to polyphony in its interpellation of the reader, assuming a multiplicity of readings rather than the monologic identification with the central viewpoint, the unitary voice of the narrator. In the specific case of travel writing, Bakhtin's perspective points towards a text which breaks the exclusive relationship between the traveller and the home reader, a text which is (also) written by and for 'others',¹¹⁹ and whose operations of cultural translation are no longer hidden but become self-conscious, as

¹¹⁸ M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', p. 271.

¹¹⁹ Although he attempts to hang on to dialogic and polyphonic authority as textual strategies, Clifford does admit that the only real solution to the problems posed by ethnographic authority lies outside the text, in a 'utopia of plural authorship' and in the more realistic prospect of ethnographies which 'no longer address a single general type of reader' ('On Ethnographic Authority', p. 51 and p. 52 respectively). For a precise criticism of Clifford's position see P. Rabinow, 'Representations Are Social Facts'; Rabinow's article discusses a first version of Clifford's 'On Ethnographic Authority' which appeared in *Representations*, 1:2 (1983), pp. 118-46.

well as programmatically de-centred, strategic, sited and interventionist.¹²⁰ Whether this is a utopian vision or a reality in contemporary Western travel writing remains to be tested.

(v) Translated Travel Texts

This image of textual polyphony and multiple readerships might be a suitable conclusion for the theoretical analysis of the connections between travel and translation. It cannot, however, constitute the basis for the applied study of specific travel texts or sequences of them. As pointed out in Chapter 2, such a study needs to take into account the constraints which operate within a particular literary system at a given time, its links with critical traditions and readers' expectations, with poetics, ideology and patronage, as well as with the socio-historical circumstances which characterize the overall cultural system of which it is part. Many of these features, however, may remain opaque as long as they are observed from a point of view which is internal to the cultural and literary systems in question. It becomes necessary, then, to adopt a comparative perspective and take a close look at what happens if and when relevant texts get translated.

Using translation as a reactive agent to counter the opacity of the home system is precisely what the present study of contemporary Italian travel writing intends to do. But this means adding yet another layer to the already complex translation operated by this type of text. New norms and expectations come into operation and influence both the selection of a text for translation and the textual strategies adopted by the translator. New

¹²⁰ Such a practice would have many points of contact with Tejaswini Niranjana's idea of a 'non-representational theory of translation' which, together with a 'historiography that is no longer concerned with recovering the past as it really was' suggests 'a notion of reading that is not epistemological but political — in the sense of being deliberately interventionist and strategic' (*Siting Translation*, p. 162).

mechanisms of interpretation and representation, of domestication and foreignization, intervene on an already 'translated' text. New asymmetries of power and prestige are activated and compounded with the ones already operating in the text, giving rise to new dynamics of appropriation and resistance. The authoritativeness of the text, the authenticity of its tales, are newly called into question and need to be negotiated and validated under new terms.¹²¹ The notion of cultural translation illustrated above, its role in the construction of cultural identities, its multiple refractions in processes of cross-cultural communication, would seem to suggest that we always ought to expect the presence of additional layers of translation. That same notion, however, also reminds us that cultural practices have material and ideological consequences: it is not indifferent who translates whom, when and how.

The remaining chapters of this study trace the individual stories of a series of travel texts which have moved, through translation, from the Italian cultural and literary system to the English one. These in-depth, contextual studies analyse the way in which macro-features of the text (identity constructions, forms of textual authority, and so on) are highlighted and at the same time transformed (rewritten) through translation. The analyses attempt to relate such textual macro features to the constraints and expectations which characterize the source and target cultures, and to illustrate the way in which the manipulations of translation allow travel narratives to be reinscribed in a new system and to operate within its ideological and textual norms; this involves a discussion of historical circumstances, critical traditions and channels and modes of reception. But the in-depth

¹²¹ Complex as they may seem, these processes take place all the time, and although the translation of travel narratives and guides from one language into many others may be an increasingly common phenomenon in the era of globalization, similar fates awaited even the first Grand Tour guides (such as Lassel's *Voyage of Italy* (1670) or Misson's *Nouveau Voyage d'Italie* (1691)), while earlier on the fluidity of the European linguistic and cultural system and the practice of imitation meant that the successive rewritings of books such as Marco Polo's *Il Milione* cannot even be described, strictly speaking, in terms of originals and translations.

examination of travel writing carried out in the present chapter also highlights links between such contextual and macro-textual perspectives and a series of micro-features which have been shown to be central to the textuality of travel narratives. These include the implicit or explicit presence of translation strategies (sometimes embodied in archaism, pidgin or 'untranslated' foreign words); the uses of realist narrative devices (for instance mimetic modes of representation and the inclusion of the reader in the text via identification with the narrator); narratological components such as the uses of voice and time; the function of rhetorical figures such as analogy and contrast; the implicit or explicit configuration of the three-way relationship between 'I', 'you' and 'he/she/they', and the choice of monologic, dialogic or polyphonic textual strategies. The connection between micro and macro-features is never a mechanistic one, and no automatic equation can be established between the use of a particular textual strategy, its objectives and its results; yet an analysis of travel writing and its translations cannot avoid at least attempting to describe such links.

4. REWRITING TIBET: ITALIAN TRAVELLERS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

(i) The Cross-roads

The history of Tibet seen through Western eyes is that of a remote cross-roads. A place so remote, in fact, that its location on the extreme margins of European imperial enterprises (or of any other type of enterprise: national, economic, and so on) marks it, paradoxically, as a crucial location for the formation of Western discourses. In *The Imperial Archive* Thomas Richards has discussed the way in which, between the 1870s and the 1930s, Tibet came to represent 'the impossible space of archive and utopia'.¹ The country was seen as an unknown and uncharted territory which, in the service of the Empire, the British India Survey could transform into the perfect map, and also as a remote place which could be imagined as the mythical repository of 'exhaustive knowledge that was always in danger of entropy, loss or destruction' in the West (p. 12). A similar genealogy is traced by Peter Bishop, who analyses Western images of Tibet in terms of a gradual shift 'from a geographically grounded sacred place to a placeless utopia'.² Due to its mythical status as an endangered location of sacred knowledge, 'Tibet is still imagined to be one of the most crucial sites in a series of global struggles:

¹ T. Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 13.

² Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La*, p. ix. Bishop has recently identified a further stage in what he calls the 'phenomenology' of travel writing fantasies about Tibet: this is the image of a 'lost sacred space for the West, one whose demise is both within recent memory and is regularly witnessed through the media, especially in the post-Tiananmen Square era'; see P. Bishop, 'Glimpsing Tibet: A Landscape of Closure and Loss', in *Placing Travel*, ed. by Tim Youngs, 56-72 (p. 57 and p. 68 respectively).

between authentic travel and banal tourism; between memory and forgetting, between soulless modernity and a vital, spiritual culture; between place and placelessness'.³

This chapter traces the discursive formations which characterize travel books written by Italian explorers of Tibet between the 1930s and the 1950s and their English translations. Travel books on Tibet — whether Italian, English or other — are the site of overlapping narratives and traditions, all of which are tied up with the story of translations and the history of translation. Within these narratives we can identify the discourse of the imperial archive or that of spiritual utopia, but also the myth of Western science, the (emerging) ethos of mountaineering and the (declining) one of exploration, the orientalism of geography and anthropology, and the new exoticism of tourism.

As illustrated in the preceeding chapters, travel and travel writing are exceptional locations for the formation of cultural and intercultural images: individual and group identity, the construction of Self and Other, gender and its representations, time and space relations (with their ideological and political implications) are all crucial elements of travel writing and are increasingly the object of critical analysis. This implies that the translation of a travel account operates a double transfer, shifting the audience and cultural references of an original which, in turn, had already been constructed as a kind of translation: an attempt to communicate the traveller's/writer's experience of the Other to an often untravelled home reader. The selection of a text for translation and the strategies adopted by the translator can highlight aspects of both source and target cultures, revealing similarities and differences among the two as they reflect themselves through the mirror of the Other. Furthermore, the images and representations constructed by both travel writing and translation are frequently asymmetrical, due to the power relationships by which they are framed. What Caren

Kaplan has recently described as 'the right of U.S. citizens to visit, invade, and invest in any location'⁴ is matched on the one hand by a practice of translation which is based on 'the asymmetrical relations of power that inform the relations between languages',⁵ and on the other by a travel writing tradition which, like translation, has long been wrapped in the myth of faithfulness and objectivity (the traveller as eyewitness) while in effect being engaged in interpreting and representing reality according to specific ideologies and hierarchies (the — Western — traveller as the source of authority). The translation of travel writing may then operate shifts at either or both of two levels: in the relationship between the reader and the writer/traveller, and in that between the target audience and the objects of the account, that is to say the places, peoples and cultures described.

Tibet offers an excellent example of such practices.⁶ Its geography and its political vicissitudes have made it unreachable, or nearly so, for most of its history. This has meant that Tibet has been the location of nineteenth-century-style Western exploration well into the twentieth century, while at the same time becoming one of the grounds on which the ethos of sport, adventure and national achievement have mixed and crossed repeatedly, drawing protagonists not only from traditional powers, such as Great Britain, but also from less obvious contenders, such as Italy.

As a matter of fact, Italy has a long history of exploration, dating back to Christopher Columbus and, perhaps more relevantly in the present context, to Marco

⁴ Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, p. ix.

⁵ T. Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 60.

⁶ In saying that Tibet is a particularly good example to choose for an analysis of Western discourses and representations, I must qualify my statement: the accounts analysed in the present article all pre-date the Chinese invasion and the destructions of the Cultural Revolution; yet I am perfectly aware of the tragedies of Tibet, and of the fact that its true and perceived remoteness has not saved it from the West, while also making it easy for the West to forget about it. While my analysis does not focus on Tibet itself, but rather on Tibet as a location of Western narratives and representations, I want to stress that this is not a neutral ground: there are responsibilities, power-struggles and ideologies beyond discourses, and there are real people, real victims beyond those.

Polo and his *Milione*.⁷ In the nineteenth century this heritage was exploited in order to 'invent' a national tradition, whose immediate 'heirs' were adventurous travellers such as Giacomo Bove, Giovanni Miani, Romolo Gessi, Vittorio Bottego, and many others. Both nationalist movements first and Fascism later were very keen to appropriate this tradition and its rhetoric for the purpose of promoting Italy's efforts to become a recognized international power and the related issue of acquiring the indispensable colonial territories. The first half of the twentieth century saw the publication of a significant number of Italian travel accounts relating to African territories which Italy had either annexed as colonies or set its eyes upon. Significantly, some of these were translated into English, and it would be possible to write a study parallel to the present one focusing on Italian travellers to Africa, their written accounts, their English translations, and the respective links to Africanist discourses in Italy and the British Empire.⁸ During the same period, however, a small but significant number of books on Tibet were also published in Italy and, in some cases, immediately translated into English. The lack of direct Italian involvement in the political vicissitudes of Tibet means that these volumes are less obviously connected to the history of Western colonialism, and this in turn allows for greater flexibility in the strategic shaping and re-shaping of discourses which is characteristic of travel, translation and travel-in-translation.

⁷ Both Polo and Columbus are not just 'Italian' but rather 'European' figures, whose contributions to the history and culture of the West have recently come under close scrutiny. On Columbus see for instance Tzvetan Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique: La question de l'autre* (Paris: Seuil, 1982); on Polo see Islam, *The Ethics of Travel*.

⁸ One of the best examples of such texts is Angelo Piccioli's *La Porta magica del Sahara* (n.p.: Apollon, 1934), translated as *The Magic Gate of the Sahara* (London: Methuen, 1935) by Angus Davidson, who also translated one of the volumes on Tibet analysed in detail in the present article.

(ii) The Scientist, the Explorer, and the Traveller

Throughout the twentieth century the number of translations from Italian into English has never been particularly high,⁹ so even a small number of cases clustering around a specific author, topic or genre is immediately visible and potentially interesting. This is particularly true if there seems to be no obvious reason for the selection of a certain book for translation — if, for instance, it is not the work of an internationally renowned writer, or if it belongs to a marginal, rather than a canonic, genre.

It is intriguing then, though not totally surprising, to find that in 1952, in the wake of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, a book by the Italian traveller Fosco Maraini, entitled *Segreto Tibet*, was translated into English and published by Hutchinson — a relatively large publisher. Yet it is far more intriguing to discover that this volume was not an isolated case, but rather had had some direct precursors in the 1930s and was also going to be followed by similar volumes in the 1950s: in 1956 *To Lhasa and Beyond*, by Giuseppe Tucci, was published in Rome in English translation; another book written by Tucci together with Eugenio Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet*, had appeared in Britain in 1935; and two years before that Kegan Paul had published Giotto Dainelli's *Bhuddists and Glaciers of Western Tibet*. Other books by Tucci continued to be translated well into the 1980s, while English editions of volumes by Maraini (such as *Meeting with Japan*)¹⁰ appeared in the 1960s and 70s.

None of these books — or authors — is particularly well known in Italy today, yet many of the volumes on Tibet which have appeared in English over the last few years (from scholarly monographs to travelogues and guides) contain some reference to

⁹ See Chapter 1 for details of current trends.

¹⁰ Trans. E. Mosbacher (London: Hutchinson, 1959; 2nd edn 1969); the original had appeared as F. Maraini, *Ore Giapponesi* (Bari: Leonardo Da Vinci, 1957).

the three Italian travellers and their work.¹¹ The lack of interest or historical memory on the part of the Italian critical establishment and, though perhaps less dramatically, of the general public, can be at least partly explained by the lack of recognition of travel writing in the Italian literary canon, since the 'invisibility' of the genre means that contemporary travel books are either quickly forgotten or survive disguised as something else (essays, 'faction', or simply unqualified hybrid works). Yet Dainelli, Tucci, Maraini and their respective writings had a specific role and cultural significance in the Italian context in which they were originally produced. And each translation, in turn, reveals something about the way in which their visions of Tibet were appropriated and rewritten for the British context between the 1930s and the 1950s.

Fosco Maraini (1912-) is a Florentine with an international background and a long history of travels in the East.¹² His books are not particularly well known in Italy, yet quite a few were translated, and *Segreto Tibet* — first published in 1951 — soon appeared in most European languages as well as Japanese.¹³ Maraini's first trip to Tibet

¹¹ Dervla Murphy cites Dainelli's work as the inspiration of the trip she described in *Where the Indus is Young* (London: Murray, 1977). In *Dreams of Power: Tibetan Buddhism and the Western Imagination* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), Peter Bishop calls Maraini a 'sensitive traveller-poet' (p. 65) and praises his 'perceptiveness and gentle humour' (p. 57). Tom Grunfeld, in *The Making of Modern Tibet* (London: Zed Books, 1987), repeatedly quotes from Tucci and from Maraini, and speaks of Tucci as 'the West's foremost Tibetologist' (p. 22) — though, unfortunately, he constantly misspells his name as 'Guiseppe'. In her study of women explorers in Tibet, *On Top of the World: Five Women Explorers in Tibet* (Seattle: The Mountaineers, 1984), Luree Miller mentions Tucci as a rival of Alexandra David-Neel in translating Tibetan manuscripts (p. 190). Tucci's works are also frequently referred to in Victor Chan's *Tibet Handbook: A Pilgrimage Guide* (Chico, Ca: Moon Publications, 1994), which is intended to be 'both a comprehensive trekking guide to mountain paths and plateau trails, and a pilgrimage guide that draws on Tibetan literature and religious history' (the quotation is from the back cover of the volume). And Heinrich Harrer, in his recent *Return to Tibet* (London: Penguin, 1985; trans. by Ewald Osers), mentions meeting Tucci in Lhasa in 1948, citing the Italian's friendship with Sherpa Tenzing and even crediting him with inciting the future hero of the Hillary expedition to undertake the ascent of Everest 'not just as a porter but as one who would, as an equal, attempt the summit' (p. 35).

¹² Details of Maraini's life and publications can be found in *Gli ultimi pagani* (Como: Red Edizioni, 1997), a collection of his writings edited by Francesco Paolo Campione; see also Maraini's self-portrait in the article 'Scosse culturali', *Antologia Viesseux*, n.s. 1.1 (1995), 7-9.

¹³ Maraini is currently enjoying a small revival: he has recently received the 'Premio Nonino 1998' and a new edition of *Segreto Tibet* (Bari: Leonardo Da Vinci, 1951) has just appeared (Milan: Corbaccio, 1998); see Claudio Magris, 'Fosco Maraini dal Tibet al Giappone: Così il viaggio diventa letteratura', *Corriere della Sera*, 30 January 1998, p. 31; Franco Marcoaldi, 'Fosco: un umanista dai mille volti', *La Repubblica*, 27 January 1998, p. 40; and Loredana Polezzi, 'Oltre la fine del viaggio: Fosco Maraini', *Antologia Viesseux*, n.s. 4.10 (1998), 35-46.

took place in 1937, when he was a member of one of Giuseppe Tucci's expeditions. The two travelled together again in 1948, and *Segreto Tibet* is actually dedicated 'to my master, Giuseppe Tucci'.¹⁴

Tucci (1894-1984) was the ultimate Orientalist. During his academic career he spent numerous periods of study at Indian universities and undertook six expeditions to Nepal and eight to Tibet. He wrote a large number of travel accounts (including the two already mentioned) and many learned monographs such as *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), or *Storia della filosofia indiana* (Rome and Bari: Laterza, 1977). Tucci was also the founder of the *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*, and his international fame is confirmed not only by the number of translations of his work, but also by the appearance, shortly after his death, of prestigious obituaries, such as the profile written by Mircea Eliade for the journal *History of Religions*.¹⁵ Tucci was not just a scholar of Buddhism, but also described himself as a Bhuddist, and claimed that because of this all doors were open to him in Tibet.¹⁶

The personality and life of Giotto Dainelli (1878-1968), another Florentine, were in many ways antithetical to those of Tucci: a geographer and geologist, he was extremely committed to the ethos as well as the initiatives of the 'Italian Empire'.¹⁷ He travelled to Africa as much as to the East, took part in the 1913-14 De Filippi expedition to Western Tibet, which was one of the biggest 'national' Italian enterprises of the period, and wrote books such as *La conquista scientifica dell'Impero* (Rome: Edizioni Nuova Antologia, 1936), or *Gli esploratori italiani in Africa* (Turin: Utet, 1960), as well

¹⁴ The dedication is on p. 5 of the English edition, *Secret Tibet*, trans. by Eric Mosbacher (London: Hutchinson, 1952). Where no specific reference is made to English editions the translations are mine.

¹⁵ M. Eliade, 'Giuseppe Tucci', *History of Religions* 24.2 (1984), 157-59.

¹⁶ Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre* (Rome: Libreria dello stato, 1950), pp. 27-28.

¹⁷ Dainelli became the last Fascist Podestà of Florence, and eventually fled for the Repubblica di Salò; for a biographical profile of Dainelli see Aldo Sestini, 'L'opera geografica di Giotto Dainelli', *Rivista geografica italiana*, 76.2 (June 1969), pp. 201-06.

as a monograph on Marco Polo which is a model of national mythologizing,¹⁸ and a full-length commemoration of the Duca degli Abruzzi,¹⁹ an explorer and member of the Italian royal family who had reached the status of national hero — and archetypal ‘good colonialist’.

Predictably, these three dramatically different men projected three very different *personae* in their respective writings. Yet a network of historical and biographical references ties each one to the others. Many aspects of their journeys to Tibet — and of the accounts they wrote about them — are relevant to a study of the connections between travel, nations and empires. The relationship they entertained with the Italian authorities, the fascist regime and institutions such as the *Società Geografica Italiana* (founded in Florence in 1876, and directly inspired by, as well as linked to, comparable European institutions)²⁰ are complex and significant. Both Tucci and Dainelli held prestigious public positions and developed strong links with the authorities both during and after the fascist regime. The Italian military forces also supported Tucci’s expeditions to Tibet and often directly participated in them.²¹ Dainelli, on the other hand, insisted that his expedition to Tibet distinguished itself by having no sponsors and no allegiances to any ‘Societies and Committees’, thus stressing the individual and ‘heroic’ nature of his travels, but also indirectly confirming the official status of most similar enterprises, including his other trips to Asia and Africa.²²

The complex arrangements Tucci and Dainelli (and De Filippi before them) managed to make for the financing of their enterprises sometimes included political

¹⁸ *Marco Polo* (Turin: Utet, 1941).

¹⁹ *Il Duca degli Abruzzi* (Turin: Utet, 1967).

²⁰ On the history and role of the *Società Geografica Italiana* see Enrico De Agostini, *La Reale Società Geografica Italiana e la sua opera dalla fondazione ad oggi* (Rome: Reale Società Geografica Italiana, 1937) and Maria Carazzi, *La Società Geografica Italiana e l’esplorazione coloniale in Africa* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1972).

²¹ Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, pp. 6-7.

²² G. Dainelli, *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale* (Milan: Mondadori, 1932), pp. xiv-xv.

connivance and private sponsorship. In his introduction to *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*, Tucci mentions the support he received from various fascist confederations and from Mussolini himself.²³ Later on, in the preface to *A Lhasa e oltre*, which is an account of his 1948 journey, he even acknowledged that funding difficulties were resolved by the interest shown in his expedition by one of the most powerful politicians of post-war Italy, Giulio Andreotti. Andreotti's intervention saved Tucci from having to contact foreign sponsors (something which he says he was trying hard to avoid — thus confirming that even if the goals of his trip were scientific, its character was eminently national).²⁴

Finally, Italian travels to Tibet had clear connections with the British Empire and its interest in the area. The 1913-14 De Filippi expedition, of which Dainelli was a prominent member, was accompanied by two English topographers, and De Filippi was later made Knight Commander of the Indian Empire, a recognition which confirms the crucial role still assigned at the time to the complete mapping (and the myth of the perfect archival knowledge) of Tibet. A few decades later, Tucci gave a detailed account of the role played by the Foreign Office in obtaining permits for his 1948 expedition, and stressed that the British authorities in India were still the necessary link between Tibet and the rest of the world.²⁵

Significantly, Maraini's book bears fewer marks of this intricate political background: he is not the organizer and leader of a scientific expedition, but a simple participant, who identifies himself as a young traveller and observer, rather than an 'authority'. The predominant political interest in *Segreto Tibet* is (as one might expect, given that the book was published in 1951) for the destiny of Tibet itself, while the

²³ Giuseppe Tucci, and Eugenio Ghersi, *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale* (Rome: Accademia d'Italia, 1934), p. 10.

²⁴ Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, p. 7.

²⁵ Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, pp. 6-7.

author's personal links with national or colonial realities are only indirectly visible in his writing.

The status of each one of these three men in their elective community and the *personae* they adopt in their writing also affect the nature of their texts and their reception (in Italy and elsewhere), sometimes confirming and sometimes contradicting the image created by the traces of their allegiances to authorities and institutions.

The explorer Dainelli, after claiming the absolute independence and the personal nature of his enterprise, displays his national pride by devoting an entire chapter of *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale* to past Italian travellers to the Himalayas, and then maintaining, throughout the book, a strongly antagonistic attitude towards all other contenders. His accounts — just like the pictures accompanying them — are dominated by the central figure of the author/traveller, his 'I' and his 'eye' surveying and controlling everything and everyone around him.²⁶ He appropriates landscapes and people, in a constant stream of possessives ('[il] mio Tibet Occidentale', '[i] miei Ladachi').²⁷ His lust for travel is the real motor of the entire trip, and the final paragraph of the book, with its oversized picture of the explorer as romantic hero, could not make it clearer:

Ed anche noi, giù, con i carichi, verso la pianura. Che malinconia! Che malinconia dover porre la parola 'fine' ad una impresa tanto desiderata, ad un viaggio tanto meraviglioso! E l'ultimo, forse, della vita!

L'ultimo della vita? A questa idea mi ribello. L'ultimo? Non ancora! (p. 403)

The Orientalist Tucci, on the other hand, despite stressing the Italian credentials of his expeditions in his prefaces, expresses more internationalist attitudes in the body

²⁶ On this self-referential attitude in travel writing and on the role of the surveying eye see Mary B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, especially pp. 165-76, and Nicola Bottiglieri, *Nel verde mare delle tenebre* (Rome: Edizioni Associate, 1994).

²⁷ Dainelli, *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale*, p. xvi.

of his texts, which are clearly meant to appeal to a cosmopolitan cohort of scientists and academics, as well as educated readers. Tucci's texts and his *persona* are, in fact, particularly complex. He fits perfectly with the 'Orientalist's conception of himself' as described by Edward Said: 'a hero rescuing the Orient from the obscurity, alienation and strangeness which he himself had properly distinguished'.²⁸ At the same time, Tucci's travel accounts repeatedly, almost obsessively, stage the (apparent) contradiction between the Western scientist and the 'orientalized Orientalist'. This staging of the personality of the traveller takes place mostly in passages directly addressed to the Western reader, which combine proud reminders of personal scientific achievement with the recurrent mention of the author's 'un-Europeannes', his 'nomadic' nature, his mistrust for machines and modernity, his religious and mystical inclinations which helped him to commune with the Tibetans and to appreciate even the 'medieval' aspects of the place.²⁹ A remarkable testimony of Tucci's Orientalist attitude can be found in the preface to *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci* where he describes the way in which he managed to obtain access to monasteries and other sacred monuments:

Non basta la conoscenza della lingua e dei dialetti; bisogna saper conquistare la fiducia di questa gente, dare ad essa l'impressione che c'è un'affinità spirituale fra il visitatore e loro, abbandonare alle frontiere della loro terra quella boria europea di cui è tanto difficile spogliarsi. Io mi presentavo in veste di discepolo, anche se la conversazione su temi astrusi di teologia e metafisica — quando trovassi monaci capaci di intendermi — mostrasse che non ero un novizio; mi genuflettevo di fronte alle statue, recitavo le formule di preghiera nel silenzio austero dei sacrari, facevo devotamente accendere sugli altari una lampada votiva, ad incremento del mio merito, e portavo con sommo rispetto alla fronte ogni libro o statua che mi fosse offerta.³⁰

²⁸ *Orientalism*, p. 121.

²⁹ Such recurring themes and tropes are regular features of Western representations of Tibet as described by Bishop, in *The Myth of Shangri-La* and 'Glimpsing Tibet', and by Laurie L. Hovell, 'Horizons Lost and Found: Travel Writing and Tibet in the Age of Imperialism', PhD thesis, Syracuse (1993).

³⁰ Tucci and Gherzi, *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*, pp. 11-12. Although the book is written together with Eugenio Gherzi the preface (pp. 7-14) is by Tucci alone. Similar attitudes to modernity are highlighted by M. Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, in relation to travel writers such as Wilfred Thesiger (p. 58) and others, who challenge readers to 'consider the plight' of primitive communities whose life 'expressed layers of humanity' that have been 'covered up and lost in their own modern age' (p. 159).

The boundaries between truth and lies, between the traveller's disguise and his real identity, between instrumental behaviour and profound belief are blurred, and the resulting picture is perhaps best interpreted in terms of the mechanisms of 'projection and displacement' through which, in the travel writing of the imperial age, 'profoundly troublesome questions of national identity and self-identity were addressed obliquely, sometimes even unconsciously, as questions of authority and order, of purpose and direction, were mapped onto another landscape'.³¹

The ambiguity of Tucci's *persona* is also reflected in his attitude to travel writing as a genre, which in turn makes the analysis of his texts and their translation particularly difficult. Tucci saw himself primarily as a scientist, and the majority of his work was published in the form of learned academic studies of the religion, art and customs of Tibet. While his travel accounts reached a larger public, he tried to stress their scientific nature and goals in his prefaces and, at least initially, in his choice of titles (e.g. *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*). Yet it is clear from those same prefaces that he only saw the travel accounts as a minor enterprise: any comparison between the 'diaries' and the academic volumes is resolved in favour of the latter, and Tucci constantly refers readers who are interested in the details of Tibetan civilization to his own scientific publications.³² One of the results of the distinction made by Tucci between the two kinds of writing is that he sometimes

³¹ T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 7.

³² See for instance Tucci and Ghersi, *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*, p. xiii. Mary Louise Pratt ('Fieldwork in Common Places', p. 32) has noted that, despite supposed differences in professional and scientific status, ethnographic and travel writing share many discursive practices and tropes, and she has pointed out that often 'scientific' and 'personal' accounts are produced side by side by the same ethnographer, possibly because 'personal narrative [...] mediates a contradiction within the discipline between personal and scientific authority'. This interpretation would certainly seem to fit Tucci's case: the validity of his scientific output is constantly reinforced by the proof of direct experience and understanding of the cultures described provided by the personal narrative of the travel accounts; yet the travelling is only justified by its scientific goals and by their ultimate outcome — the scientific publications.

delegates the more menial task of annotating the details of the trip to one of his collaborators. The account of the 1933 expedition, which takes the form of a diary written more or less daily, is signed by both Tucci and Gherzi. According to the preface Gherzi wrote the day to day entries, while Tucci added all remaining parts (descriptions, anecdotes, and so on). The general use of the first person plural makes it difficult to identify the exact boundaries of each man's contributions, yet the fact that Tucci should choose such a format is in itself indicative of his attitude: while his scientific *persona* is always very prominent (especially in the anecdotal part of the narration, where he can show off his knowledge of local language and customs), he is generally a far more self-effacing traveller than Dainelli, or even Maraini.

The scientific status achieved by Tucci also has consequences for a study of the translations of his works. *A Lhasa e oltre*, the diary of the 1948 expedition, appeared in Italian in 1950 and was then translated into English by Mario Carelli; both volumes were published in Rome by the *Libreria dello Stato* (which was closely linked to the *Accademia d'Italia*). The peculiarities and political implications of such an 'in-house' process may have resulted in some unusual translation strategies, and require specific attention when analysing the resulting text. On the other hand, such a use of translation is in itself significant, since it represents a clear attempt to favour the international dissemination of Tucci's work and, consequently, a conscious recognition of the strategic role played by translation in achieving status and prestige. The extent to which such a strategy was due to Tucci as an individual or to the Italian establishment of the period as a whole is difficult to ascertain. Tucci was very ambitious and had a talent for self-promotion. International fame was his constant goal, and a number of his books were published directly in English (*Tibetan Painted Scrolls*) or German (*Die Religionen*

Tibets),³³ although it is dubious whether he possessed the linguistic skills needed to write in those languages without substantial help. The fact that the English translations produced in Italy were usually published under the aegis of the *Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente* (founded and directed by Tucci), or related institutions, could also be seen to confirm that Tucci himself was behind the whole strategy. Yet the institutions involved, and the *Libreria dello Stato*, also carried the seal of the Italian authorities, and it is true that during the period of the fascist regime, when Tucci became an established figure, translation into and out of Italian was the object of a lively debate, much of which focused on the internal and external functions of translation, the possible need for its regulation and control (including the introduction of quotas), and the relative prestige of Italian and foreign books.³⁴ In Tucci's specific case, given the official role he played and the relationship he entertained with the Italian authorities both during and after the fascist regime, it is highly probable that his personal goals coincided — or, at least, were not irreconcilable — with institutional ones: Tucci aimed at personal fame, the establishment wanted status and recognition for Italian science and academia, and translation into (prestigious) foreign languages was perceived as a way to achieve both.

Fosco Maraini wrote mostly after the Second World War, when the age of exploration was definitely over and the age of empire was crumbling to dust. He could not be the first (white) man to set foot anywhere and the romantic myth of travel to virgin lands was by now unavailable to him — or to anyone else.³⁵ Though interested in

³³ Tucci's text appeared as part of G. Tucci and W. Heissig, *Die Religionen Tibets und der Mongolei* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1970).

³⁴ On this subject see E. S. Bates, *Intertraffic: Studies in Translation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), pp. 17-27. In at least one related case an 'in-house' translation can be seen to have been meant to perform a clearly political role: in 1918 Giotto Dainelli gave a speech on Italian Dalmatia at a meeting of nationalist associations in Florence; though the paper could only have been delivered in Italian, it was published (still in Florence) in English translation, signalling the will to turn the document into a statement of international resonance; see G. Dainelli, *Italian Dalmatia and Bare Figures: A Paper Read at the Meeting of Citizens 'Pro Fiume and Dalmatia' Held in the 'Salone dei Cinquecento' in Florence on the 29th of December 1918* (Florence: Tip. E. Ariani, 1919).

³⁵ The possible exception is constituted by a new brand of national and international 'heroes': the mountaineers whose conquering ethos involved challenging and defeating nature in its last strongholds,

ethnography from a very early age, Maraini only acquired a stable academic position relatively late in life, and *Segreto Tibet* is written from the point of view of an eager but inexperienced traveller. This *persona* is partly an autobiographical reference (Maraini was twenty-four years old when he first travelled to Tibet) and partly a narrative device, remindful of Mark Twain's 'innocents abroad' and their revealing naivety. No longer an explorer and not yet a scientist, Maraini (though far from perceiving himself as a tourist) was from the very beginning marked by the contradictions typical of all contemporary travellers and travel writers, who are inevitably but uneasily poised between tourism and anti-tourism. Writers and critics have repeatedly attempted to distinguish between the traveller and the tourist, yet, as pointed out by Jonathan Culler and James Buzard, the boundaries between these figures and their respective experiences are increasingly blurred, and the insistence on an opposition between the two is often the sign of a snobbish attitude which is by now an integral part of tourism itself.³⁶ Insistence on being a traveller is often an attempt 'to convince oneself that one is not a tourist',³⁷ despite the invasive (and supportive) presence of a tourist industry which in the second half of this century has reached unprecedented global dimensions. Maraini presents himself as an apprentice traveller, and his ideal readers³⁸ are not a selected group of exceptional individuals (whether they call themselves explorers, orientalists or mountaineers), but

including the mystic peaks of Tibet. Maraini was a keen mountaineer and was to take part in expeditions to various Himalayan peaks, which he later narrated in *Gasherbrum IV: La splendida cima* (Bari: Leonardo Da Vinci, 1959) and *Paropàmiso* (Bari: De Donato, 1963). Yet *Segreto Tibet* is not a mountaineering book — although, paradoxically, it was reprinted in Italy in the 1980s as part of a series called *Exploits* which included works by Sir Edmund Hillary, Reinhold Messner and Chris Bonington; see F. Maraini, *Segreto Tibet*, rev. edn (Milan: Dall'Oglio, 1984).

³⁶ On the opposition between travellers and tourists see Fussell, *Abroad*, pp. 37-50 and Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, pp. 2-4; on its futility see J. Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism' and J. Buzard, *The Beaten Track*.

³⁷ Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism', p. 156.

³⁸ This terminology, based on the work of Gerald Prince and Jonathan Culler, is used to distinguish the 'ideal reader' (perfect and perfectly understanding) from the actual readers (those who do effectively read a book) and from the target readers (or 'virtual readers', in Prince's terminology: those the author thinks he is actually writing for). For an overview of these concepts and extensive bibliography see *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. by J. P. Tompkins (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980).

rather the mass of potential tourists — who can at least begin realistically to dream of reaching Tibet. The years of *Segreto Tibet* were, after all, those in which Lévi-Strauss was writing *Tristes Tropiques*, with its opening chapter devoted to the end of travel (at least as he knew it), and its caustic remarks on travel books and their mystifications. And Maraini's volume might well have been one of those Lévi-Strauss was thinking of when he wrote:

Nevertheless this kind of narrative enjoys a vogue which I, for my part, find incomprehensible. Amazonia, Tibet and Africa fill the bookshops in the form of travelogues, accounts of expeditions and collections of photographs, in all of which the desire to impress is so dominant as to make it impossible for the reader to assess the value of the evidence put before him. Instead of having his critical faculties stimulated, he asks for more such pabulum and swallows prodigious quantities of it.³⁹

(iii) Translating Tibet

In examining the relationship between Dainelli's, Tucci's and Maraini's travel accounts and their respective English translations it is possible to trace the Italian and the British representations of Tibet which they support, as well as their position with respect to the genre of travel writing as it evolved between the 1930s and the 1960s, at a time when the face of the earth and the modalities of travel changed dramatically, and adventure travel became an integral part of the tourist industry.

As already noted, Italian travel writing is a largely invisible and uncoded genre, which has so far escaped extensive critical attention. As a result of their marginality, however, Italian travel books may enjoy greater than average freedom from codifications and expectations. English travel writing, on the other hand, while

³⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. by John and Doreen Weightman (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976; original edn Paris: Plon, 1955), p. 16.

remaining far from being a core canonic genre, enjoys a much more established position. Despite its widely recognized heterogeneity and hybridity, critics tend to agree on the presence of a series of constraints and conventions which characterize British travel writing and its development as a genre, at least from the Renaissance onwards.⁴⁰ Susan Stewart has noted that ‘between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century the paradigm of travel writing shifted from supposedly “disinterested” observation to biographical narrative’, determining conspicuous renegotiations ‘in the tension [...] between description and narration’.⁴¹ A similar line of development is noted by Mark Cocker specifically in relation to British travellers to Tibet from the second half of the nineteenth century to our day. Discussing the work of Eric Bailey, whose travels date from 1904-9 and 1911-13, Cocker remarks that in his writing Bailey ‘would never have thought it his responsibility to develop history like the plot of a novel’.⁴² His adherence to a factual and objective model of travel writing meant that Bailey ‘continued in the same vein as [his] nineteenth-century forebears’ (p. 7). Later travellers to Tibet, such as Frederick Spencer Chapman, were much more inclined to make their subjectivity (and even their fantasies) the focus of their travel narratives, with a subsequent shift towards narrative devices more usually associated with fictional genres such as the adventure novel (p. 217). Romance and adventure are constitutive elements of the travel narrative, whether fictional or factual, but they are particularly evident in British travel writing between the wars,⁴³ and even more so in the accounts of British travellers to Tibet, with their strong emphasis on mystery and magic, remoteness and archaism, and the related feelings of elation and horror, the sense of freedom from Western regulations and the opportunity for ‘simple one-upmanship’.⁴⁴ While these and similar characteristics of

⁴⁰ See Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion of these issues.

⁴¹ *Crimes of Writing*, p. 177 and p. 180 respectively.

⁴² *Loneliness and Time*, p. 23.

⁴³ See Fussell, *Abroad*, pp. 208-09 and p. 70.

⁴⁴ Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 237.

British travel writing do not constitute strict generic norms, they create 'a preconstituted horizon of expectations' for the readers.⁴⁵ Such generic expectations can also influence the translator, inviting him or her to adopt domesticating strategies which will bring the foreign text in line with its new readership, or at least gesture to the recontextualization of the work in a different literary and cultural system.⁴⁶

The analysis which follows is based on four books and their translations: Fosco Maraini's *Segreto Tibet* and *Secret Tibet* (translated by Eric Mosbacher, London: Hutchinson 1952);⁴⁷ Giotto Dainelli's *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale* and *Buddhists and Glaciers of Western Tibet* (translated by Angus Davidson, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co 1933); Giuseppe Tucci's and Eugenio Ghersi's *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale* and *Secrets of Tibet* (translated by Mary A. Johnstone, London and Glasgow: Blackie, 1935); and, finally, Tucci's *A Lhasa e oltre* and *To Lhasa and Beyond* (translated by Mario Carelli, Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1956).

Significant shifts take place in the titles of the volumes: only those of Tucci's *A Lhasa e oltre* and Maraini's *Segreto Tibet* are translated literally; the others are either substantially modified or cut short, excluding references to the scientific or 'heroic' nature of the accounts in favour of attractive exotic stereotypes. These, in turn, are very much in keeping with the image of Tibet as a mysterious, remote and magical land which dominates British travel writing devoted to the area. Starting with the titles, the translations appear to adopt strategies which favour the normalization of the Italian texts to the conventions of British travel writing and suggest at least a partial generic shift

⁴⁵ See H. R. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 79.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of the relationship between generic expectations and translation strategies.

⁴⁷ The translation is based on the 1951 edition; the Italian volume was reprinted in 1955 and 1959, in different format, but without alterations to the text; the 1984 dall'Oglio edition, on the other hand, was substantially revised and also contained new material. All references in this article are to the 1959 reprint.

(from scientific or semi-scientific writing to popular adventure travel), bringing the books in line with the expectations of the British public. This domesticating strategy also modifies the ideological nature of the texts, removing, or at least diluting, their nationalistic intentions and encouraging a reading more in keeping with notions of individual escape, adventure and self-discovery — all common features of modern and contemporary travel writing.⁴⁸ Maraini, it seems, had already made these choices by himself, and even Tucci, previously so concerned with the visibility of his scientific credentials, appears to have opted, later on, for a more popular image.

All the translations are generally accurate and do not immediately strike one as substantially divergent from the Italian originals. There are however a few cuts. The most obvious omissions are located in the introduction to Tucci's *A Lhasa e oltre*, whose Italian translator seems preoccupied with erasing all political references, whether to Giulio Andreotti or Mao Tse Tung.⁴⁹ Some of these deletions can be explained as signs of a diplomatic (or even reticent) attitude to potentially controversial and embarrassing details. Alternatively, they may result from a conscious choice to exclude from the translation facts and names which would have required extensive explanation in order to be made intelligible to the average British reader. In either case, the cuts are consistent with a domesticating translation strategy.

More frequently, however, it is the lack of changes and manipulations which is striking. In the translations of *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale* and *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale* (both produced in Britain in the 1930s) references to Fascism and fascist authorities remain, as do those noting the 'great

⁴⁸ This, of course, is not to say that contemporary travel and travel writing have no collective and political dimension. On the contrary, the centrality of the (Western) individual's experiences is essential to the role played by travel writing in supporting first the enterprises of the colonial age and then the neo-imperialism of the post-colonial world. On this subject see, among others, Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*, Kaplan, *Questions of Travel*, Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

⁴⁹ Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, pp. 7-8; *To Lhasa and Beyond*, pp. 7-8.

contributions of Italy' to Western knowledge of Asia. Evidently, at the time of translation, none of these clashed with the dominant discourse and interests of the British Empire. In fact at that point in time Mussolini and Italian Fascism were not yet 'the enemy' and even enjoyed some popularity among sectors of British society. A comparison of the English translations of Tucci's and Dainelli's texts with that of Angelo Piccioli's *La porta magica del Sahara* (published in 1934) confirms this analysis. Africa, unlike Tibet, represented a location where British and Italian colonial interests might at least potentially clash. Yet Angus Davidson's translation of Piccioli's book (published in 1935) does not in any way attempt to erase or diminish the innumerable references to heroic fascist imagery, the heritage of ancient Rome and the benefits of Italian colonization. The overall feeling one gets from Davidson's translation is that of a foregrounding and reinforcement of the colonial ethos, a character shared by both British and Italian discourses of the period.

Perhaps predictably, the translation of *A Lhasa e oltre*, which was produced in Italy, is the most literal of the four: though kilometres, for instance, are accurately turned into miles, syntax and imagery tend to remain unchanged. All the other translations present areas in which the imagery used by each author appears to have been systematically manipulated. This is the case of Maraini's taste for mixing the sensual and the macabre, which is definitely played down by Mosbacher, as in the following passage, where the translator twice avoids using the verb 'to penetrate', and does not reproduce the anthropomorphic quality in the description of the trees:

Le sinistre cripte vegetali in cui penetro con lo sguardo come il profano penetra esplorando con gli occhi una ferita si perdono fra tendami e baldacchini verdi, su verso le chiome pesanti e tenebrose degli alberi. (*Segreto Tibet*, p. 33)

Green tendrils and canopies, stretching up to the dense foliage of the trees, conceal sinister vegetable hollows, into which I look in the way a layman searches a wound with his eyes. (*Secret Tibet*, p. 41)

Sensuality is a recurrent feature of Maraini's writing and of his photographs (many of which are used to illustrate *Segreto Tibet*), as is the association between love and death, eroticism and decadence. Eroticized visions of people and places are frequent in travel writing as well as in all Western forms of representation of its Other, and the association between sensual attraction and danger is a common motif.⁵⁰ The 1947 British film *Black Narcissus* is a striking example of the way in which the Himalayan landscape and its exhilarating effects on a group of Western nuns could be used to embody the maddening and deadly influence of otherness.⁵¹ Yet Tibet itself was traditionally represented by British travellers as 'the last bastion of all that is good and pure and spiritual in the world',⁵² and Maraini's daring mixture of sensuality and death may have appeared to clash too vigorously with this convention. When erotic visions are found in British travel writing on Tibet, they refer to the imagery of purity and secrecy associated with this 'unviolated' country and to its effect on 'the peculiarly masculine psyche of colonial Europe', according to which 'being spurned [...] became itself a justification for penetrating Tibet's forbidden valleys'.⁵³ Maraini's vision of wounded and baroque nature could not be more distant, for instance, from the notorious image of Lhasa as a virgin bride conveyed by Lord Curzon in a famous letter to the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ See for instance Kabbani, *Imperial Fictions* and Campbell, 'Renaissance Voyage Literature and Ethnographic Pleasure: The Case of André Thevet'.

⁵¹ The film, directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger (Archers Film Productions, 1947), is an adaptation from the homonymous novel by Rumer Godden (London: P. Davies, 1939).

⁵² Hovell, 'Horizons Lost and Found', p. 3.

⁵³ Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 216.

⁵⁴ On this subject see Cocker, *Loneliness and Time*, p. 238.

(iv) Time, Voice, and the Reader

By far the most important changes between all the source and target texts under examination take place in the use of tenses, and these clearly affect the way in which the voice and the *persona* of the narrator emerge from the pages. Edward Said has pointed out that when analysing any orientalist texts ‘the things to look at are style, figures of speech, setting, narrative devices, historical and social circumstances, not the correctness of the representation nor its fidelity to some great original’.⁵⁵ This is particularly applicable to travel writing, which Said himself identifies as one of the founding discourses of Western ethnocentrism (p. 117), and which is particularly sensitive, as a genre, to issues relating to the representation of the Other.

Tense and voice, in particular, are central in Johannes Fabian’s discussion of the distancing devices used in anthropological discourse to exorcise the Other and, at the same time, to use ‘it’ as a suitable term of comparison for criticising one’s own culture and society.⁵⁶ Fabian actually takes as a point of departure for his argumentation an analysis of the way in which time, space, scientific knowledge and power became inextricably linked in the modern genre of travel writing, and how, subsequently, a spatialized notion of time was to form an integral part of the discourse of anthropology (pp. 15-16). For Fabian, then, travel writing is both an antecedent and a companion of ethnographic writing, and most of his observations can be applied to both genres and their discursive practices. The uses of time (and tenses) highlighted by Fabian set in place what he calls the ‘denial of coevalness’ and allow the (Western) observer to establish a clear division between himself/herself and the observed (pp. 23-25). The

⁵⁵ *Orientalism*, p. 21.

⁵⁶ See Fabian, *Time and the Other*; for a discussion of Fabian’s work see Sturge, ‘Translation Strategies in Ethnography’.

present, in particular, transforms personal experience into objective generalizable facts, and relegates the Other to an unchanging world in which progress and individuality are denied in the name of a 'culture garden' which can be idealized or vilified, but, at least in theory, should never be modified by the observer (p. 47). The past tense, on the other hand, by adding a historical dimension to personal narrative, allows for a different type of distancing, whereby the Other is removed to a primitive dimension, while an opportunity is created for nostalgic memories of 'the way things used to be' and for the critical comparison of a corrupted present with visions of a supposedly golden age. The uses of person and pronouns are also part of these distancing devices: the 'I' which appears in travel writing normally establishes a dialogue with the reader (the implicit 'you' to whom the narrative is addressed), while leaving the Other, the observed, outside the exchange, unable to speak for herself or himself. Through these discursive devices travel writing operates a special kind of translation, which Tejaswini Niranjana has described as 'the essentializing of difference [...] that permits a stereotypical construction of the other'.⁵⁷

Time and person are also essential elements in the strategies of interlingual translation — the second level in the 'double translation' of translated travel writing. Rachel May has described the way in which the use of tense regulates the relationship established between narrator and reader, pointing out the delicate balance a translator needs to find between the strategies and conventions available in different languages and literary traditions on the one hand, and the narrative structure of the text on the other.⁵⁸ Tenses and their combinations are subject to grammatical constraints which are specific to each language; yet they may also perform functions which are essential to the

⁵⁷ Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 10.

⁵⁸ R. May, *The Translator in the Text: On Reading Russian Literature in English* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1994), p. 59.

narrative structure of a text, and a tense shift between original and translation, although conforming to the requirements of the target language, may result in significant oversimplification of the narration. Referring to the specific case of Russian novels and their English translations, May points out that while Russian allows for tense shifts which would sound awkward in English, the choice of a fluent translation strategy significantly alters the relationship between the narrator, the object of the narration and the reader. The example she uses to illustrate her point highlights the distancing effect caused by a shift from present-tense narration in Russian to a uniform past (the standard, unmarked choice for English narrative) in the translation (pp. 76-77).

Rachel May's observations about the conventional predominance of the past tense in English language narrative can be applied to travel writing as well as to the novel, and have important consequences for the translation of Italian travelogues. It is particularly noticeable, in fact, that all the Italian texts under examination take the form of travel diaries written predominantly in the present, a tense which can be used in Italian to convey both the absolute, timeless quality of the object of (anthropological) description and the progression of events in historical or fictional narrative. Although both Tucci, Dainelli and Maraini extensively use this tense, the overall effect is different in each case.

In Tucci's use of the present it is indeed possible to recognize the classic appropriation of the Other pointed out by Fabian: removing the reality described to the timeless sphere of the absolute present, Tucci portrays an unchanging world captured by the eye of the Western man, but yet existing in a different, timeless dimension. This in turn allows the transformation of the Other into an object, of the 'oriental' culture into a 'culture garden', of the Western man's description into the eternal reality of the place and people observed. Such a strategy is perfectly coherent with Tucci's chosen *persona*,

and even helps to explain some of its apparent contradictions. The frequent use of the absolute present of anthropology signals that Tucci's text is intended to be more than a personal, anecdotal narrative, and should be read (at least in part) as a scientific treatise. The traveller is presented as 'the expert', 'the scientist', who understands the natives better than they ever will (and even wins religious disputes with wise old Lamas), yet is also capable of contemplating with joy and nostalgia a world forever lost to the West and its rationality. The darker side of this vision, however, implies the transformation of Tibet into a mythical Shangri-La, for which the only possible change is in destruction. And in fact Tucci, twenty years before the Chinese invasion, goes so far as predicting that his work and the photographic evidence which accompanies it may soon become the last testimony of monuments which are crumbling into ruins and of a great past whose traces are fatally being lost.⁵⁹

In Dainelli's case the present tense is one of the main strategies for the staging of his heroic *persona* and his unshakeable colonial ethos: together with the ever-present 'I' and the recurrent use of possessives, the historic present dominates the narration and constantly reminds the reader of whose perspective the text is written from, inviting him or her to admire the traveller rather than identify with him. In this present tense narration there is hardly any space for dialogue: the natives do not speak, they are only there to serve the Western man — who in fact remarks again and again on their faithfulness, their willingness to execute any of his orders, and so on. In a move which is typical of colonial and orientalist discourses, Dainelli even observes that the local people seem to have been born only to obey him and desire nothing more.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ G. Tucci, 'Prefazione', in Tucci and Gherzi, *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*, pp. 7-14 (p. 13).

⁶⁰ Dainelli, *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale*, p. 108; Said and Niranjana mention many similar examples.

In the English translations of both Tucci's *A Lhasa e oltre* and Dainelli's *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet occidentale* the past tense is used throughout the body of the narration. The choice follows the dominant conventions of English narrative, and does not really alter the relationship between observer and observed: the denial of coevalness is still in place (we live in the modern world, they belong to the medieval past, which we have left through progress) and no real voice can be granted to 'the natives'. However, the use of the past tense tends to erase the claims to scientific status in Tucci's prose, or to tone down the immediacy of Dainelli's gesturing. This results in the simplification of the travel narrative into a conventional collection of adventures and anecdotes in which the traveller (or his translator) attempts to strike a balance between narration and description, between subjective experience and objective observation, in accordance with the perceived norms of contemporary British travel writing. Such a simplification goes hand in hand with the downsizing of the egocentric dominance of the narrating voice and the reassessment of the traveller's *persona*.

After this treatment not much is left of the 'great Italian explorer' Dainelli who is turned into yet another travel writer, ready to offer entertainment (and useful information) to the British reader (and to the British authorities in India). His 'heroic' stance, which was likely to be read as pure theatricality once it was removed from its cultural, historical and biographical context, is played down, and his direct appeals for the reader's admiration and awe are also contained by the translation. A good example of these strategies can be found in the chapter titles, whose visibility invites both author and translator to use them to frame the episodes and captivate the reader: Dainelli's Herculean 'Le mie fatiche di Le' is turned into a much tamer 'My Duties at Leh', while

the personal tone of 'Si arriva all'oasi di Tarím Scer' is transformed into the much more general 'Arrival at the Oasis of Teram Sher'.⁶¹

In the translation of Tucci's *A Lhasa e oltre*, the shift from present to past tense happens after the opening pages and marks a move, not at all present in the source text, from the description of an unchanging world to the narration of a personal experience placed in a past which may well no longer correspond to reality. This strategy is combined with the frequent disappearance from the more descriptive passages of direct addresses to the reader (often signalled by the second person pronoun 'tu') which in the source text favour the identification between the narrating voice and the audience. So 'il Kanchenjunga tu puoi vederlo anche di là' becomes 'the Kanchenjunga can also be seen from there',⁶² where the introduction of the passive voice deletes the personal appeal to the reader and his/her direct inscription within the landscape evoked by the passage. A few lines afterwards, 'a girar per le vie di Darjeeling o Kalimpong tu non sai dove ti trovi' is rendered as 'A walk through the streets of either town will not provide one with the expected supply of local colour';⁶³ here the substitution of the impersonal and rather formal 'one' for the direct personal pronoun 'tu' repeats the erasure of the reader from the text, discouraging identification with the narrating voice. The continuity between narration and description guaranteed by the generalized use of the present tense, and the identification of traveller and reader encouraged by such devices as the use of personal pronouns, gives the whole of the source text the status of an objective and timeless account, one which the reader can still access as if through his or her own eyes but also accept as an authoritative expert account of the 'reality' of Tibet. The English

⁶¹ Quotations are from *Il mio viaggio nel Tibet Occidentale*, p. vii and *Bhuddists and Glaciers of Western Tibet*, p. vii. The Italian 'si arriva' is an impersonal construction, yet it is commonly used to refer to actions performed by the speaker/writer as part of a group of people and in this usage it carries colloquial and informal connotations, typical of spoken language.

⁶² See *A Lhasa e oltre*, p. 10 and *To Lhasa and Beyond*, p. 10.

⁶³ *A Lhasa e oltre*, p. 10; *To Lhasa and Beyond*, p. 10.

translation, on the other hand, clearly defines the boundaries of personal experience through the use of different tenses (the present for the initial, general, introduction and the past for the account of travel experiences), and discourages personal identification with the narrator, transforming 'the scientist' Tucci into just one of the many travel writers whose personal accounts the reader can draw upon to obtain an interesting and learned, but only partial and definitely historicized, vision of Tibet.

An example of the possible alternatives available to the translator is represented by Mary A. Johnstone's translation of Giuseppe Tucci's and Eugenio Ghersi's *Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*. In the source text, the presence and superimposition of two authorial voices combines with narrative devices such as the choice of tense, to create a text characterized by a complex, but not immediately evident, stratification. In the English version the continuity between events, observations and descriptions obtained through the use of the present is maintained, as is the dominant second person plural which identifies the travellers (and their interacting voices) as 'we'. The reader is carried through a seamless sequence of experience and 'knowledge' of Tibet, and the resulting feeling is that of being transported to an eternal (or imaginary) land, untouched by history, and immune even to the presence of the travellers themselves. The break comes only at the very end of the book, when a physical barrier marks the end of the spell and the re-entering of history, in the form of the need to tell the story of the journey and transform it into knowledge available to the Western world:

Siamo al termine del viaggio. [...] È tutta una fuga di picchi giganteschi che solcano di bianco il cielo purissimo: una barriera immensa oltre la quale noi ci siamo spinti per rievocare, con discreto successo, le glorie di un popolo che conobbe un tempo splendori d'arte e di pensiero. (*Cronaca della missione scientifica Tucci nel Tibet Occidentale*, p. 387)

We are at the end of the journey. [...] We see group behind group of gigantic peaks which cleave with their white crests the intense purity of the blue sky; an immense barrier, beyond which we have thrust ourselves in order to bring back to knowledge - with some success - the glories of a people who once were familiar with splendours of art and thought. (*Secrets of Tibet*, p. 206)

Tucci's *persona* and his choice of dialogic voice are carried over into Johnstone's translation, which re-presents them to the audience of the English version, resisting the pressure to conform to the dominant conventions of English narrative and possibly also accepting the narrators' demand that their work should be read as part of a scientific enterprise, rather than a personal adventure.

Maraini's case is at least partly different. *Segreto Tibet* is loosely based on the 1948 Tucci expedition. The author adds references to the 1937 trip and also frequent memories of his experiences in Japan. The different layers of the narrative are conveyed by the use of a variety of tenses: the present for the 1948 main *récit*; the past for the memories of previous events. The structure of the book is far looser than that of the other examples examined, since the mixing of tales from more than one trip excludes *a priori* the strict adherence to the diary model. The narrative scatters information about the chronology and topography of events through an infinite mosaic of digressions, including anxious reflections on the West and its civilization, as well as expressions of nostalgia for Europe and 'home'. Dialogue is frequent in the book: the 'natives' are constantly given a voice and their characters are developed — they even strike back and criticize the Western traveller, as in the case of the grumpy old man of Yatung, who, when Maraini comes to see him after ten years and offers him some photos taken in 1937, ironically replies 'Non ha avuto fretta eh...!'.⁶⁴ The same quality is to be found in Maraini's portrait of the Tibetan princess who provides the romantic interest of the book: she is beautiful, sexy, loves to flirt and has a fantastic name — Pemà Choki, 'Loto

della Fede Gioiosa' (p. 41) — which, alone, makes her unforgettable. The princess even gets a chance to tell Maraini that Western representations of Tibet are wholly inaccurate (p. 215), yet the polyphony of the text⁶⁵ stops just short of allowing the girl to show traces of her real otherness: after all the dialogues between the two have been thoroughly rewritten (that is, both translated and narrated) by Maraini and even his attraction for Pemà Choki springs from the mixture of Oriental and Western features which characterizes both her looks and her behaviour.

Unlike Tucci (the scientist) or Dainelli (the explorer) Maraini does not choose to distance himself from the 'common Western reader' (and potential traveller/tourist). On the contrary, he constructs his voice from the beginning as that of the willing listener, the eager observer, the dutiful pupil — though clearly he is not so inexperienced after all. The effect of such narrative devices is a clear invitation for the (potential) mass reader to identify with the narrator and see through his own eyes. Furthermore frequent references not just to Italy and Italian culture, but to a shared European heritage (including Cervantes, Baudelaire, Trollope, and the unavoidable nostalgia for 'l'Europa bella e lontana', p. 36) indicate that Maraini had an international, rather than strictly national, audience in mind.

⁶⁵ On the notion and relevance of polyphony (and the related concept of dialogism) in narration see M. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel'. For Bakhtin heteroglossia, the 'social diversity of speech types' always present in any language, enters the text (and, in particular, the novel) through such elements as 'authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters' (p. 263). Heteroglossia acts as a centrifugal force, which tends to make the text dialogic and to oppose centripetal forces (both social and stylistic ones, such as canonization), which strive to impose a 'unitary' and 'monologic' language (p. 270). Truly dialogic novels, according to Bakhtin, are characterized by a 'system of languages', of which authorial language is a subset: 'Even when we exclude character speech and inserted genres, authorial language itself still remains a stylistic system of languages: large portions of this speech will take their style (directly, parodically or ironically) from the languages of others, and this stylistic system is sprinkled with others' words, words not enclosed in quotation marks, *formally* belonging to authorial speech but clearly distanced from the mouth of the author by ironic, parodic, polemical or some other pre-existing "qualified" intonation' (pp. 415-16). As Rachel May (*The Translator in the Text*, p. 4) recently pointed out, translators and their voices also become part of this complex system: their intervention 'shifts a work's frame of reference', and may well alter the relationship between narrator and reader, often favouring monologism over dialogism, and 'a single, central consciousness' over the fluidity of the source text (p. 84).

In Mosbacher's English translation of *Segreto Tibet*, the most significant shift is to be found, once again, in the use of tenses: even the complex tense structure of Maraini's prose is often flattened into a uniform past. The text thus becomes once again predominantly a retrospective narrative of anecdotes and adventures. This time, however, the process is not systematic, and some of the present tense narration is kept, allowing for the feeling of identification with the narrator and the impression of seeing through his eyes. Yet even the final page, which takes the reader through a series of frantic camera shots, from the plane's lift off in Calcutta to its landing in Rome, is totally rendered in the past tense, thus destroying the calculated effect of the solitary past tense in the final line of the Italian version:

I viaggiatori cominciano già a muoversi, a prepararsi, si ha la sensazione che Roma sia lì, a due passi. Dopo un momento si scorge Capri e, prima che ce se ne possa quasi avvedere, ecco i fari di Ciampino. "Ieri eravamo a Calcutta". (*Segreto Tibet*, p. 227)

The passengers started moving about, getting ready; we had the feeling that Rome was only a few yards away. Indeed, so it was. After what seemed a moment we saw Capri and, almost before we realized it, there were the lights of Ciampino airport.
 "Yesterday we were in Calcutta." (*Secret Tibet*, p. 234)

This passage also illustrates a further translation strategy: Maraini's references to a wide European background (and audience) are highlighted (and some are even added) by Mosbacher, while elements which can be perceived as strictly Italian, are omitted, or at least made less cryptic for the British reader.⁶⁶ Yet most of the time such shifts can be minimal, since Maraini had already willingly adopted a European, rather than purely

⁶⁶ So in the passage quoted above 'Ciampino' becomes 'Ciampino airport'. Earlier on, a series of nostalgic memories of Tuscany and the Abruzzi, culminating in a reference to Leopardi, is kept virtually unchanged, but its title is modified from '*Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia*' (a direct quotation of the title of one of Leopardi's most famous poems) to a more immediately obvious 'Leopardi in the heart of Asia'; see *Segreto Tibet*, p. 199 and *Secret Tibet*, p. 210.

Italian, *persona*. This made his text less impervious than Tucci's or Dainelli's to a reading (and a selection of translation strategies) which conformed to the expectations of a British audience.

(v) 'International Bastards'

Through the manipulations illustrated in the previous section, as well as in the choice to translate the books in the first place, it is possible to see how British discourses appropriated a whole series of Italian texts: the scientist Tucci, the great Italian explorer Dainelli and the innocent traveller Maraini were all translated (and, where necessary, adapted) according to the conventions of English travel writing and put to the service of its interests, whether they were those of the imperial archive in the first half of the century, or those of the tourist industry in the second.

Each of the three men portrayed in this article, and each of their travel accounts, struggled to construct a different *persona*. Yet all these writers (or at least all their *personae*) had something in common: they belonged to a small community of Western men who crossed the boundaries of disciplines as well as those of nations and empires. Whether they travelled as national heroes, Western scientists or cosmopolitan adventurers, they all embodied the crossing of discourses. And they all ended up, whether they wanted it or not, with mixed allegiances to national, imperial or consumerist Western enterprises.

In *The English Patient*, Michael Ondaatje describes a group of similar men exploring the Sahara, and calls them 'international bastards':⁶⁷ they go to Africa to find themselves or to lose themselves; some of them come to hate nations, some die for them

⁶⁷ M. Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (London: Picador 1993), p. 244.

yet none of them can resist the irruption of history into the wilderness of the desert. They are eventually required to declare their allegiances, and failure to do so explicitly is not going to save them.

Tucci, Dainelli and Maraini are also victims of the 'English patient syndrome'. They too are 'international bastards'. One travelled as an Italian hero and was appropriated by other, imperial interests, his voice restrained by the conventions of a more self-conscious genre. Another proudly constructed his own image and fortune as that of the Italian orientalist of international standing, yet at least the part of his work devoted to travel writing escaped his control and came back with a vengeance, eventually forcing him to give up the scientist's *persona* and give in to the more popular tastes of the audience his books had found, especially in translation. The last one soon learnt to play with the expectations of an international readership — yet even his naïf but learned wanderer was partially transformed and simplified in the process of translation and ended up resembling very closely the model of the contemporary anti-tourist, with his love of adventure and his constant search for the frontiers of the exotic.

It was their translators who continued their job for them, readjusting their tales to new audiences, different conventions, different cultural expectations. In doing so the translators themselves had to negotiate between the different demands of source and target text (source and target culture), to choose alternative strategies, and at least partially — and possibly unconsciously — to declare their own allegiances. In this respect, it would appear that the translators were 'international bastards' too.

5. CROSSING BORDERS AND EXPLOITING HYBRIDITY: LANGUAGE, GENDER AND GENRE IN THE WORKS OF ORIANA FALLACI

(i) Writing Best-sellers

Oriana Fallaci is possibly the most well known among contemporary Italian women writers, widely read both in and outside Italy. From the late fifties, when she began to publish in book format, to the early nineties, when her latest novel, *Insciallah* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1990) appeared, she was one of the very few Italian writers (whether male or female) whose books regularly reached the top of Italian best-sellers lists and registered six- or even seven-figure sales, as in the case of *Un uomo* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1979), her fictionalized biography of Alekos Panagulis, which sold 1,800,000 copies in two years, and was described as the first Italian 'longseller'.¹ Fallaci is also one of the very few writers who command generous advances from Italian publishers and her works have been the object of intensive pre-publication marketing campaigns, involving either massive exposure or exasperating lack of information.² Fallaci is among the extremely few contemporary Italian writers who have

¹ The expression is used in Giovanna Rosa, 'Il nome di Oriana', in *Pubblico 1982: Produzione letteraria e mercato culturale*, ed. by Vittorio Spinazzola (Milan: Milano Libri Edizioni, 1982), pp. 57-80 (p. 59). Rosa (p. 19) also gives the figure of 1,800,000 copies sold as the one officially reported by Rizzoli in July 1981. Publicity placed by Rizzoli in 1990 (near the time of the publication *Insciallah*), presented *Un uomo* as 'Il primo longseller in Italia. 1.000.000 di copie' (see for instance the advertisement in *Amica*, 8 July 1990, p.83). Fallaci's previous narrative volume, *Lettera a un bambino mai nato* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1975) had also achieved immediate success in Italy, selling 400,000 copies in four months, and leading Cesare Medail to write that 'un successo così anomalo va al di là del caso editoriale e invita a riflettere sul rapporto fra cultura e società' ('I perché di un best-seller in libreria', *Corriere della sera*, 22 March 1976, p. 3).

² In the case of *Un uomo*, reviews (based on extracts which had appeared on *L'Espresso* and *Il Corriere della sera*) were written even before the official date of publication of the volume. See for instance Claudio Marabini, "'Panagulis, amore mio.' Il romanzo del momento: *Un uomo* di Oriana Fallaci", *La Nazione*, 28 June 1979, p. 16. Marabini sourly commented: 'Il caso letterario del momento sembra chiamarsi Oriana Fallaci. È un caso letterario nato prima dell'oggetto che lo dovrebbe provocare e sostenere, cioè il libro. Ma ormai siamo arrivati a questo punto. Del resto questo nostro è un paese a moderno sviluppo industriale. Gli

been regularly translated into a variety of languages and who have managed to command substantial audiences abroad, in countries as different as the USA, Iran and Japan.³

Yet Oriana Fallaci is not popular with Italian critics. In Italy not a single monograph has been written about her, while essays and articles devoted to her in literary and other academic journals are few and far between.⁴ Most volumes dealing with contemporary Italian literature simply ignore her, notwithstanding the fact that she wrote at least two of the most popular novels of the period: *Lettera a un bambino mai nato* and *Un uomo*.⁵ When she is mentioned, Fallaci is often (and sometimes vehemently) attacked: most of the pages which have been devoted to her by Italian critics, as well as most of the reviews of her work which have appeared over the years in newspapers and magazines, contain scathing indictments of the quality of her writing as well as her personality. Critics and reviewers often refer to her as 'il caso Fallaci', or 'il fenomeno Fallaci', marvelling at her unexplainable (and, by implication, unjustified) popularity, in the face of her lack of literary skills and human sympathy. In a review of *Insciallah* which appeared in *Noidonne* in 1990, Stefania Giorgi offered the following baffling portrait of the writer:

elementi della produzione sono già mobilitati, e con perentoria determinazione. Di quello che sarà il libro della Fallaci sappiamo non solo il titolo (*Un uomo*) e l'argomento, ma anche le qualità, indubitabili ovviamente, la tiratura iniziale e le traduzioni già pronte in tutto il mondo.' *Insciallah*, on the other hand, became a *caso letterario* for the secrecy which surrounded it, starting with the episode in which Fallaci had the journalist Lanfranco Vaccari arrested on suspicion of attempting to read the manuscript. The episode, which soon became part of the 'folklore' surrounding the figure of Fallaci, is reported by Camilla Cederna in 'Madame veleno e i calzini di Panagulis' (*Wimbledon*, 1.5 (July-August 1990), 2-3), a poisonous article which led Fallaci to register a formal libel complaint against Cederna; on the dispute see Liliana Madeo, 'Duello tra le regine del giornalismo', *La Stampa*, 23 December 1990, p. 7.

³ The most recent of Fallaci's books have in fact appeared at the same time in many countries and languages. And her *Lettera a un bambino mai nato* had been translated into 21 different languages by 1979; on the subject see Paola Fallaci, 'Una donna chiamata Oriana', *Annabella*, 30 August 1979, pp. 18-25 (p. 18 and p. 21).

⁴ For an extensive bibliography see John Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci: The Rhetoric of Freedom* (Oxford and Washington, D.C.: Berg, 1996).

⁵ Even a study specifically devoted to the fortunes of the Italian novel between the 1960s and the 1980s, such as Stefano Tani's *Il romanzo di ritorno*, does not mention her works at all.

Resta il mistero, intatto, del “fenomeno Fallaci”, di questa piccola donna con gli occhi incisi dall’eye liner che i massmediologi americani non esiterebbero a definire una “cult figure”. Una che la conoscono anche in Lapponia, che scrive sulle sue maternità mancate, sui suoi amori e le sue guerre e vende milioni di copie in tutto il mondo. Una che ha intervistato tutti i potenti della terra dallo Scià a Khomeini, da Kissinger a Gheddafi [...]. Potente, di successo, ammirata, invidiata, odiata, idolatrata. Una donna speciale che nessun giornale femminile, nessuna donna ha mai eletto a modello di una femminilità avventurosa, dirompente e vincente. Da proporre nei test sulle donne di successo tra Marina Ripa di Meana e Margaret Thatcher. E che nessun uomo tira quasi mai in ballo per definire i contorni di quello che una donna può o non deve permettersi di fare.⁶

The tone of Giorgi’s prose — constantly verging on the ironic or even the sarcastic, while at the same time expressing a mixture of veiled admiration, envy and disbelief — is typical of many Italian reviews of Fallaci’s popular books. Her work tends to be classed as subliterate and unduly commercial, while Fallaci herself is attacked as self-obsessed and over ambitious, as well as being blamed for cynically exploiting anything and anybody in order to produce books which are programmed to appeal to a mass public and to become best-sellers. In a recent monograph devoted to Fallaci, John Gatt-Rutter points out that critics and intellectuals have tended ‘to dismiss her books as “journalistic”, “paraliterary”, or “bestsellers”’,⁷ and it is certainly true that Fallaci has never been fully accepted by the literary establishment. The only literary prizes she has ever won in Italy are the ‘Premio Bancarella’ (based on sales and popularity) in 1970 for her first-person account of the Vietnam war, *Niente e così sia* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1969) and the ‘Premio Viareggio del Presidente’ in 1979 for *Un uomo*.⁸

⁶ S. Giorgi, ‘Parlar di guerra fa bene alla guerra’, *Noidonne*, 11 (November 1990), 84-85 (p. 85).

⁷ J. Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 172.

⁸ The ‘Premio del Presidente’ is a separate prize from ‘Premio Viareggio’, and is attributed for civic rather than literary merits. In 1980, when Fallaci’s Italian publisher, Rizzoli, attempted to enter *Un uomo* for the prestigious ‘Premio Campiello’, various members of the jury declared in an interview (published by *Panorama*, a magazine owned by Rizzoli’s rival Mondadori) that the work had no literary merit and no place in the selection submitted for the prize. One of the judges, Piero Chiara, stated that Fallaci’s book was ‘il classico best-seller che ha compiuto un cammino extraletterario’, and another, Mario Pomilio, was even more direct, maintaining that ‘per le sue qualità *Un uomo* ha ottenuto più di quanto meritava. Il successo del libro è

Outside Italy, reception of Fallaci's work is more mixed. In the USA in particular, which she has chosen as her adoptive home since the late sixties, Fallaci has been awarded honorary degrees, she has been the subject of doctoral dissertations and scholarly studies, and her tapes and notebooks are held in the 'Fallaci Collection' of the Mugar Library of Boston University. Yet she still remains an elusive and controversial figure, not really integrated in or even affiliated to the literary circuit, and both suspicious of and suspect to its accolades. When, in 1977, she received a degree from Columbia College, Franco Occhiuzzi expressed his surprise in the *Corriere della sera* and attempted to explain her American success. He remarked that Fallaci 'non frequenta l'establishment culturale, neanche quello americano, che la stima molto', and went on to note:

Sono pochi i libri di argomento politico pubblicati in America nell'ultimo decennio che non citano lunghi brani dalle sue esplosive interviste con la storia. [...]

Pearl S. Buck la stimava e diceva che i suoi libri sarebbero rimasti. Ray Bradbury la giudica una delle scrittrici più impegnate d'oggi. In un romanzo di Irving Wallace, la massima ambizione della protagonista è diventare 'come la Fallaci'. Ma per sapere queste cose bisogna leggerle in inglese, in tedesco, in spagnolo, in giapponese, non in italiano.⁹

In the United States — and at least in part in the UK — Fallaci is so well known that even today newspapers can mention her name without any need for additional clarification.¹⁰ Furthermore, in an Anglo-American context, Fallaci's achievements are not

stato più che rilevante, ma questo non significa che si tratti di un fatto letterario'. See Bruno Crimi, 'Oriana Fallaci, in arte Liala', *Panorama*, 19 May 1980, p. 169. Fallaci reacted to the polemic by deciding to withdraw the book from competition; on the episode see Aldo Santini, 'Così Oriana si innamorò del suo grande eroe greco', *Oggi*, 15 August 1990, pp. 37-41 (p. 40).

⁹ F. Occhiuzzi, 'Oriana dottoressa (ad honorem) del best-seller: Laurea dell'università di Chicago alla scrittrice e giornalista Fallaci', *Corriere della sera*, 9 June 1977, p. 3.

¹⁰ As recently as May 1998, the *Houston Chronicle* could describe its senior editorial writer, James Howard Gibbon, as someone who 'began his newspaper career in 1968 [...] and later covered Project Apollo as a research assistant to Oriana Fallaci'; 'The Editorial Board', *Houston Chronicle*, 5 January 1998, p. 19. In Britain *The Independent*, remembering Martha Gellhorn, mentioned 'Oriana Fallaci, the BBC's Kate Adie, Carole Walker and Sue Lloyd Roberts, and now Christiane Amanpour of CNN' as Gellhorn's 'professional

perceived as confined to the journalistic field, and her narrative work is the object of frequent positive remarks.¹¹ Even Fallaci's renowned stubbornness and her tendency to turn her personal life into a public performance seem to raise admiration rather than contempt.¹² And while it may well be right to state that no Italian woman models herself on Fallaci,¹³ the same is certainly not true of Americans: at the time of the Vietnam war, 'il suo ritratto con l'elmetto in capo di guerriera diventa un poster e fa coppia con quello del Che nelle camere degli adolescenti di mezzo mondo';¹⁴ and even today, Giselle Fernandez, USA journalist and anchor woman, lists Fallaci as her 'personal hero'.¹⁵

Fallaci herself has repeatedly offered outspoken comments on her lack of popularity among the Italian critics and her better reception in the United States. In an interview with her sister Paola, Fallaci asserted that both her success and her unpopularity had been predicted by one of her early mentors, the writer and journalist Curzio Malaparte, who warned her: "Lei mi assomiglia, Oriana! Un giorno avrà un successo strepitoso. Però non

descendants'; Rupert Cornwell, 'Martha Gellhorn, legend of war reporting, dies', *The Independent*, 17 February 1998, p. 5.

¹¹ Obituaries of Ben Raeburn, founder and director of Horizon Press, quoted among his merits the publication of 'the complete works of Frank Lloyd Wright and a pantheon of authors from Irving Howe and Alfred Kazin to Robert Olen Butler and Oriana Fallaci'; David Cay Johnston, 'Ben Raeburn, 86, Publisher of the Known and the Aspiring', *The New York Times*, late edition, 23 April 1997, p. 23. And a recent review of Jennifer K. Harbury's *Searching for Everardo: A Story of Love, War and the CIA in Guatemala* (New York: Warner Books, 1997), unfavourably compared this memoir, partly written by Harbury 'in the second person, [...] as if she were addressing Everardo himself', to Fallaci's *A Man* (trans. by William Weaver, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980; London: Arrow Books, 1981), which adopts the same technique; see Marie Arana-Ward, 'Love in a Time of Terror', *The Washington Post*, 23 March 1997, p. 1.

¹² In an article on women and cancer, published in the *Boston Globe*, the journalist Patricia Smith remembers her shock when, during an interview, Fallaci pulled at her own sweater and started shouting at the cancer in her breast ("Do you hear me you bloody bastard? I will outlive you!"). In retrospect, however, Smith's attitude is one of admiration: she initially describes Fallaci as an 'Italian spitfire', but later adds 'now I recognize this unflinching, confrontational language as the only language the ogre understands'; P. Smith, 'The Cruel Truth about Cancer', *The Boston Globe*, 11 May 1998, p. 1.

¹³ At the time of Fallaci's controversy with Cederna, for instance, *La Stampa* published a series of short interviews with younger Italian women journalists, all of whom clearly refused to identify Fallaci (or Cederna, for that matter) as either a personal or a professional model; see Francesco Grignetti, 'Le colleghe non si schierano: "Per noi sono due modelli gloriosi ma superati"', *La Stampa*, 23 December 1990, p. 7.

¹⁴ Aldo Santini, 'In Messico Oriana ebbe il suo battesimo del fuoco', *Oggi*, 8 August 1990, pp. 38-43 (p. 41).

¹⁵ See John Parkyn, 'Sunshine Magazine Name Dropping', *Sun-Sentinel Ft. Lauderdale*, 24 August 1997, p. 4.

in Italia: all'estero. In Italia la odieranno a morte come odiano me. [...] Perché in Italia, per essere accettati quando si è bravi, bisogna finire in una cassa da morto, sepolti sotto un cipresso.'"¹⁶ The link between success and lack of critical acclaim is expressed even more explicitly (and colourfully) by Fallaci in the following declaration which, significantly, has been used by her Italian detractors as the final proof of an extremely egocentric nature:

Ce l'hanno con me perchè non sono morta e sono antipatica come tutte le persone scomode, e mi odiano perché sono un mito, mi conoscono perfino in Lapponia, e in Romania ci sono tante bambine che si chiamano Oriana. Poi faccio rabbia perché sono brava in un mestiere monopolizzato dagli uomini.¹⁷

Such polemical remarks highlight the issue of popular literature, best-sellers and their status in different cultures and critical traditions. While it is true that 'popular fiction' is today an international phenomenon and ought to be analysed as such, it is also true that even the definition of 'best-seller' itself differs from country to country, and so does its cultural status. In a recent comparative study of women's best-sellers in France and the USA, Resa L. Dudovitz observes that 'with the advent of simultaneous releases in different languages' it is no longer accurate 'to isolate a bestseller [sic] to one country'.¹⁸ However, despite also pointing out 'the phenomenal expansion of publishing groups into the international market' (p. 2), and the trend 'towards greater control of decision-making by

¹⁶ P. Fallaci, 'E spiccò il volo. Poi venne la tragedia', *Annabella*, 6 September 1979, pp. 16-25 (p. 19).

¹⁷ Reported in C. Cederna, 'Madame veleno e i calzini di Panagulis', p. 3. Similarly (but less polemically) Occhiuzzi mentions Fallaci's remark that 'In Italia [...] il successo è considerato una specie di furto e suscita soltanto invidie. In America il successo è un premio che viene col merito: l'*establishment* culturale ha un *fairplay* che noi non abbiamo' ('Oriana dottoressa (ad honorem) del best-seller', p. 3). And Aldo Santini reports Fallaci's assertion that 'in Italia il successo è considerato un'infermità, una colpa, qualcosa per cui si deve essere puniti. In Italia, come minimo, chi ha successo è cornuto, è ladro. Poiché di me non si può dire né l'una né l'altra cosa, si dice che sono cattiva, odiosa, prepotente. Che faccio la primadonna' ('In Messico Oriana ebbe il suo battesimo del fuoco', p. 41).

¹⁸ R. L. Dudovitz, *The Myth of Superwoman: Women's Bestsellers in France and the United States* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 2.

financial powers rather than literary' (p. 187), Dudovitz concludes that the influence of the literary tradition (which in France, for instance, 'marginalizes popular or mass expression', p. 188) is still strong, and 'French intellectual circles [...] still regard any book which becomes a bestseller [sic] with horror and fascination' (p. 54). The same ambiguity noted by Dudovitz with respect to French reactions to mass popularity can be found in the Italian context: already in the sixties, Umberto Eco analysed the negative attitude of the Italian cultural establishment towards the growing phenomenon of mass culture,¹⁹ and recent volumes such as Gian Carlo Ferretti's *Il best seller all'italiana*, or Vittorio Spinazzola's *L'offerta letteraria*²⁰ testify to the ongoing debate about, and persistent prejudices against, authors and books which achieve great popular success.

Thus the contrast between the growing influence of the cultural industry and the persistence of a traditional, 'highbrow' perception of literature may well explain some of the most enraged Italian reactions against Fallaci and her volumes,²¹ especially in view of the ruthless advertising campaigns set up by Rizzoli, and of the author's own unashamedly popular choices, including her insistence on lower than average cover prices for her books.²² After all, a recent study of the Italian publishing industry contrasts a traditional

¹⁹ See U. Eco, *Apocalittici e integrati* (Milan: Bompiani, 1964) and U. Eco, *Il superuomo di massa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1978).

²⁰ See also *Pubblico 1982*, edited by Spinazzola; introducing this second volume, Spinazzola writes: 'Tra i letterati perbene, l'espressione "autore di successo" non è mai suonata come un gran complimento. Furbo sì, questo autore, in quanto sa percepire gusti e preferenze del gran pubblico; invidiabilmente fortunato anche, visto che la sua abilità gli consente di vendere forte, guadagnando fior di quattrini. Ma insomma, se i suoi libri piacciono tanto alla gente, devono pur essere piuttosto correvi, devono concedere qualcosa alla faciloneria, andando sul già letto, già saputo, già scontato. Meglio diffidarne, di uno scrittore simile. Il lettore coltivato se ne starà sulle sue' (p. 7).

²¹ On the policies of the Italian cultural industry in recent years, and their relationship with 'highbrow' culture see also Lino Pertile, 'The Italian Novel Today'.

²² For a catalogue of reactions on advertising and sales strategies adopted by Rizzoli and Fallaci see Paolo Mattei, 'Dicono di lei: "Troppo mistero, non è mica Thomas Mann"', *Wimbledon*, 1.5 (July-August 1990), 3-4. Fallaci wrote in a letter to Marisa Milani: 'Non scrivo per la gente "colta", come si suol dire, e tantomeno per gli intellettuali. [...] Scrivo per coloro che non conosco, partendo dal presupposto che si tratti di gente che non sa ed ha bisogno o desidera d'essere informata'; quoted in M. Milani, 'La lingua "effimera" di Oriana Fallaci', *La Battana*, 8.25 (May 1971), 23-49 (p. 25). On Fallaci's insistence on low cover prices see also A.

editorial strategy aimed at 'un limitato gruppo di persone che legge molto' and based on 'molteplicità di titoli e [...] basse tirature', with 'un'editoria diversa che sceglie il largo pubblico e che per raggiungerlo deve vendere a basso prezzo e a tal fine deve pubblicare soprattutto "non libri". "Non libri" are defined as 'volumi caratterizzati dal fatto che il loro contenuto e linguaggio sono costruiti in modo da adeguarsi agli interessi e alle capacità di lettori medi non qualificati'. The category includes 'le grandi opere e dispense, i best seller, i romanzi rosa, i libri di testo di larga diffusione ecc.', and they require 'un grande sforzo di vendita: spese promozionali, pubblicità, rete di vendita'.²³

Yet the hostility against Fallaci can be only partly explained as a reaction to her popular success and to what is perceived as the industrial quality of her best-selling power. Not all best-sellers are necessarily classified as 'non libri' and either ignored or attacked by Italian critics. If this were the case it would be impossible to explain, for instance, the different critical reception reserved, in Italy, to Italo Calvino's *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore* (Turin: Einaudi, 1979) and Umberto Eco's *Il nome della rosa* (Milan: Bompiani, 1980), two volumes which were published at very short distance from Fallaci's

Santini, 'Così Oriana si innamorò del suo grande eroe greco', p. 40. On the growing role of advertising in the Italian cultural industry see D. Forgacs, *Italian Culture in the Industrial Era*, pp. 173-90. The enduring negative attitude towards the conscious introduction of industrial processes in the world of cultural production is made particularly clear by Vittorio Spinazzola in *La democrazia letteraria* (Milan: Edizioni di comunità, 1984). Spinazzola divides contemporary literature into four categories: 'una letteratura avanguardistico-sperimentale', characterized by 'impegno di trasgressività programmatica' and 'interesse per la ricerca e la verifica dei mezzi del linguaggio'; 'letteratura istituzionale' which tends to establish 'una linea di continuità rispetto alla tradizione'; 'letteratura d'intrattenimento', consisting of 'prodotti sorretti ancora da un preoccupazione di decoro formale, [...] ma volti chiaramente a uno scopo di piacevolezza ricreativa'; and finally 'una letteratura che potremmo dire residuale, [...] concepita per un'utenza infima, di scarsa e recente acculturazione, oppure prossima a esser espulsa dai processi culturali. Si tratta di prodotti strutturati secondo una voluta intenzione di volgarità enfatica, con una forte degradazione dell'estetico e una tendenza infrangibile al semplicismo stereotipo' (pp. 146-47). Later on, Spinazzola adds: 'L'autore paraletterario è caratterizzato da una consapevolezza spregiudicata del tipo di domanda cui intende dare risposta, e sulla cui base prefigura la fisionomia del suo pubblico elettivo, per composito che possa essere' (p. 150).

²³ Francesco Silva, Marco Gambaro and Giovanni Cesare Bianco, *Indagine sull'editoria*, p. 108; my emphasis. On the category of 'non libri' see also Luca Clerici, 'Best-seller e non-libri', in *Tirature '93*, ed. by Vittorio Spinazzola (Milan: Baldini & Castoldi, 1993), pp. 257-65.

Un uomo and achieved six-figures sales.²⁴ Besides promotional strategies and sale records, other factors need to be taken into consideration when analysing the reception of Fallaci's works. The following pages address the paradox of her great popular success and critical failure (as well as the accompanying issue of her greater popularity abroad than in her home country) in the light of a series of transgressions and disruptive moves which Fallaci appears to adopt as a systematic breaking of boundaries in the areas of genre as well as gender and language. These strategies are essential elements in an understanding of her reception, and all of them are more or less directly linked to travel, both as a practice and as a literary trope.

(ii) Journalism, Travel and Fiction

Fallaci is not usually classified as a travel writer. The only mention of her works in the context of Italian travel writing is to be found in Franco Trequadrini's analysis of the development of the genre, where Fallaci's *Niente e così sia*, Corrado Pizzinelli's *Siamo tutti in guerra: Le inutili stragi nel Vietnam* (Milan: Longanesi, 1968) and Goffredo Parise's *Due, tre cose sul Vietnam* are cited as "classici" del genere [...] nel secondo dopoguerra'.²⁵ No other essay on contemporary Italian travel writing includes references to Fallaci, and in all other contexts she is usually described either as a journalist, or a novelist, or a combination of the two. Yet all of her books, from the most fictional to the most autobiographical, from those which display a thoroughly narrative structure to those which

²⁴ On the success of these two books and their relationship with Fallaci's volume see Alberto Cadioli, 'La strategia dei best-seller', in *Pubblico 1982*, ed. by V. Spinazzola, pp. 215-37. On the significance of the success of Eco's book in Italy see also L. Pertile, 'The Italian Novel Today', pp. 9-11.

²⁵ F. Trequadrini, 'Come e perché la letteratura di viaggio', p. 24.

are openly presented as collections of her famous interviews, rely heavily on the topos of travel and on the traits we typically expect to find in a travel book: they all present journeys as the motor and structuring motif of action and adventure; they dramatize the encounter with the Other and its shaping influence for the interior development of the protagonist who is presented as a thoroughly involved participant observer; they rely on the trope of the traveller as eyewitness in order to authenticate the factual as well as the emotional and ethical content of the 'tale'; and they focus both on the dialogue with the Other, whose voice is continuously represented in the text, and the one with the home reader, whose presence is constantly evoked through the use of more or less fictional narratees.

Given the lack of visibility of travel writing in the context of contemporary Italian literature, it is not surprising that this affinity between the genre and Fallaci's work should have been overlooked. As illustrated in the opening chapter of this study, while there are plenty of Italian travelogues among the production of the last fifty or sixty years, in Italy these tend not to be discussed as travel writing — or not to be discussed at all. The reasons for this invisibility are complex, but a particularly strong influence is exercised by the peculiar relationship between Italian literature and journalism. In Italy the critical debate is still strongly anchored to the issue of 'literariness', of what does and what does not fulfil 'artistic' criteria. Work which does not appear to conform to such categories is often relegated to the limbo of subliterate and deemed unworthy of critical attention. This is precisely what happens to most journalistic production, and even in the case of 'highbrow' authors who have written regularly for newspapers, it is not unusual for that part of their work which is perceived as journalistic to be denied the status of literature. Most Italian

travel writing falls directly into this category, given the privileged association between this genre and journalism fostered by peculiarly Italian phenomena such as the 'terza pagina'.²⁶

In view of this relegation of the genre to non-literary status, it is understandable that Oriana Fallaci (or her publishers for her) should never have attempted to adopt the label of travel writer. On the one hand, in the Italian context that label was simply not available to Fallaci (it was, at best, a synonym of 'reporter', her standard professional title as a foreign correspondent). Furthermore, should it have been used, the qualification would not have carried any literary status and as a consequence would not have solved the problem of establishing full writer's credentials for the journalist Oriana. Fallaci is very outspoken, and yet ambiguous, on the subject of her literary aspirations. As for most other Italian writers of this century, working for a newspaper was, for Fallaci, a necessity dictated by the search for both financial stability and popularity. As a woman of working class extraction who started her career as a journalist while still a teenager, Fallaci chose journalism as the next best thing to what she really wanted to be: a writer. In perfect accord with Emilio Cecchi's statement that many Italian writers could only afford to travel when financed by newspapers,²⁷ Fallaci has declared:

Io lo sapevo, oh, lo sapevo che avrei scritto libri e scritto sui giornali. Sì, le due cose insieme. Non ho mai pensato ai due lavori separatamente, sebbene i libri li vedessi come un oggetto più autorevole, o più nobile. [...] Al giornalismo invece pensavo come a una meravigliosa avventura. Un giorno avevo sentito parlare di Virgilio Lilli che andava in Cina per scrivere sui cinesi e le guerre, e questo mi sembrava un privilegio immenso. Io, grazie ai giornali, volevo andare in Malesia. In India e in Malesia.²⁸

²⁶ See Chapter 1 for a detailed discussion of these themes.

²⁷ See E. Falqui, *Inchiesta sulla terza pagina*, p. 106, already quoted in Chapter 1.

²⁸ P. Fallaci, 'Una donna chiamata Oriana', p. 19. It is interesting to note that Stefano Tani (*Il romanzo di ritorno*, p. 378), while listing recurrent motifs in recent Italian narrative, mentions travel precisely in the terms used by Fallaci, i.e. as 'tema avventuroso degli anni sessanta e settanta'.

For all its adventurous lure, journalism cannot really compete, for Fallaci, with the status of literature. She has asserted that, though she gave many years of her life to journalism, she really feels that she is a writer, and wants to be considered as such; she has pointed out that, when writing, she is obsessed with style;²⁹ and she has admitted that her greatest aspiration in life is to write a great book, one which will outlive her.³⁰ It is easy to connect such aspirations and interests with the 'limitations' traditionally associated with journalism: its ephemeral nature, and, at least in Italy, its failure to achieve the ultimate goal of 'literariness'. Yet, on the other hand (or, perhaps, as an alternative strategy), Fallaci has always refused invitations to repudiate her journalistic career,³¹ and has repeatedly maintained that the distinction between journalism and literature, as well as the one between fact and fiction, are a thing of the past:

²⁹ See Claudio Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', *Panorama*, 22 May 1979, pp. 216-33 (p. 219-20).

³⁰ Fallaci's most detailed account of her love/hate relationship with journalism is to be found in a long biographical interview included in Patrizia Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme* (Rimini and Florence: Guaraldi, 1978), pp. 69-102. Asked when she first thought about becoming a journalist, Fallaci replied: 'Io più che il giornalista ho sempre pensato di fare lo scrittore. Quando ero bambina, a cinque o sei anni, per me non concepivo nemmeno un mestiere che non fosse il mestiere di scrittore. Io mi sono sempre sentita scrittrice, ho sempre saputo d'essere uno scrittore, e quell'impulso è sempre stato avversato in me dal problema dei soldi, da un discorso che sentivo fare a casa: "Eh! Scrittore, scrittore! Lo sai quanti libri deve vendere uno scrittore per guadagnarsi da vivere? E lo sai quanto tempo ci vuole a uno scrittore per esser conosciuto e arrivare a vendere un libro?" [...] Così mi convinsi che per fare lo scrittore avrei dovuto aspettare d'avere i soldi e l'età. E questa idea m'ha accompagnato e avvelenato per tutta la vita, e mi ha fatto perdere anni preziosi. Decine d'anni. E per questa idea cominciai a pensare di fare il giornalista, il giornalismo era un compromesso, perché lo si poteva fare anche da giovani e da poveri. E oltre a un compromesso, un avvio, un mezzo per arrivare alla letteratura. [...] Poi mi trovai nel giornalismo, e imparai ad amarlo. [...] E così tutti i libri che volevo scrivere subito furono assorbiti, fagocitati dal giornalismo. E per questo ho verso il giornalismo una specie di rancore. Però ho anche molta gratitudine perché al giornalismo devo quasi tutto, compreso il fatto di non essere più povera [...] Però se il giornalismo non mi avesse rubato così a lungo, troppo a lungo, io mi sarei messa a "scrivere" molto prima. Ecco perché dico spesso: "Io sono uno scrittore rubato dal giornalismo". Ma ho ancora molte speranze, se non muoio presto, di dimostrare che sono anche "uno scrittore prestato al giornalismo"' (pp. 73-75). Later in the same interview Fallaci explained that her greatest aspiration was 'scrivere un libro davvero bello e importante', and added that she hoped to achieve this goal with the book she was writing at the time: 'Vorrei che fosse davvero il gran libro che i miei editori dicono e che continuasse a vivere a lungo. Vorrei che fosse il mio bambino di carta. Vorrei che questo bambino restasse vivo anche quando io sarò morta da tempo, per portare al mondo altri bambini di carta di altra gente. Perché dai libri nascono i libri, proprio come dalla gente nasce la gente. E ciò significa, ecco, significa che vorrei morire un po' meno quando morirò' (p. 102).

³¹ See for instance C. Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', p. 233.

Non ho scritto più romanzi come *Penelope* ma ho scritto romanzi. A me pare che *Se il sole muore* sia un romanzo, che *Niente e così sia* sia un romanzo. In America li definiscono infatti "non fiction novel". Vale a dire "romanzo non-finzione, non-invenzione". Perché chi ha stabilito che il romanzo debba seguire certe regole fisse e che ormai risalgono all'epoca di Carlo Cotenna? [...] È il solito logoro discorso che divide lo scrivere in giornalismo e letteratura, ed è un discorso superato, giacché non si fa più il giornalismo come cento anni fa e non si fa più la letteratura come cento anni fa. Il giornalismo oggi è spesso letteratura e la letteratura è spesso giornalismo: il confine non esiste più.³²

While fact and fiction, journalism and literature are for Fallaci meaningless oppositions, she prefers to see her work as a form of non-fiction novel, or 'faction', of the type which became popular in the USA in the seventies.³³ It is significant that Fallaci, who often refers to authors such as Jack London, Melville, Hemingway and Norman Mailer as her favourites,³⁴ should also find her generic model in contemporary American literature. It is also significant that the phenomenon of 'faction' should be closely linked to the emergence of New Journalism and to Tom Wolfe's theorization of the lack of an absolute distinction between literature and journalism,³⁵ of the right of the reporter to passionately participate in

³² Quoted in Milani, 'La lingua "effimera" di Oriana Fallaci', p. 24 (from a letter addressed by Fallaci to Milani).

³³ Fallaci labelled *Un uomo* as 'un romanzo ideologico', 'un romanzo verità', 'un romanzo sul potere', and she described the process of writing it in the following terms: 'Prova a scrivere un romanzo imponendoti di rispettare fatti, nomi, verità che incatenano la tua fantasia rischiando di incatenare anche la tua creatività... Sei continuamente tentato di toglierle, quelle manette, galoppare a briglia sciolta nei giardini dell'invenzione. E non puoi, non devi, devi essere creativo su cose già create dalla realtà. Che agonia. [...] Costruire un romanzo usando la realtà accaduta: che impresa! Credevo addirittura di inventare qualcosa. Ma poi, parlando col mio editore americano, scoprii che non avevo inventato un bel nulla: ero rientrata in un filone ben preciso della letteratura. Fu quando mi disse, tutto contento: "How marvellous! You have written a faction novel!". E io: "Ho scritto cosa?". "A faction novel, un romanzo basato sui fatti, the facts!". Poi mi spiegò che c'è il *fiction novel*, il romanzo inventato, il *non-fiction novel*, il romanzo non inventato, lui preferiva proprio il *faction novel*, il romanzo di fatti avvenuti...' (Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', pp. 217-219).

³⁴ See Cederna, 'Madame veleno e i calzini di Panagulis', p. 3; P. Fallaci, 'Una donna chiamata Oriana', pp. 19-20; Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', p. 220. On the lasting admiration for Jack London see also Oriana Fallaci, 'Il richiamo della foresta, inno alla libertà', introduction to J. London, *Il richiamo della foresta*, trans. by Ugo Dettore (Milan: Rizzoli, 1975), pp. i-xxvii. Fallaci has also compared her own lack of popularity among critics with the vicissitudes of London's career: 'Quel che succede a me in Italia in America successe a Jack London. È un giornalista, dicevano, non è uno scrittore. Né contava il fatto che il pubblico divorasse i suoi libri' (F. Occhiuzzi, 'Oriana dottoressa (ad honorem) del best-seller').

³⁵ A similar position had already been argued by T. S. Eliot in his essay 'Charles Whibley' (now in *Selected Essays*, 3rd enlarged edn (London: Faber and Faber, 1969), pp. 492-506), where he maintained that it is impossible to 'draw any useful distinction between journalism and literature merely in a scale of literary

the events he or she describes, as well as to communicate them using all the strategies and devices traditionally associated with fiction — or at least with the realist novel. At the time when Fallaci was writing her 'non-fiction novels', reportages (including travel and war books) were thus acquiring literary status and were being proposed as a perfectly viable alternative to fiction writing not only by Tom Wolfe, but also by writers such as Truman Capote and Norman Mailer.³⁶ So, although the label may not have been one she aspired to see attached to her books, travel writing (a genre in disguise in her native Italy) represented for Fallaci the natural and easy progression from her journalistic reportages towards the goal of 'writing great books'. As noted by Dennis Porter, while journalism and romance evoke a 'contradiction at the level of the writing itself' (since 'the former is associated with the idea of the investigation and reporting of contemporary events', and 'the latter suggests ritual, magic, and traditional values as well as the narrativization of experience'), 'the genres of the novel and travel writing [...] may be said to overcome the contradiction, since they fuse the two; they investigate and narrativize'.³⁷ For Fallaci, then, writing travel books was a way of solving the apparent contradiction between her two chosen professions. It was a way of achieving some form of permanence (the long life of literature to which she openly aspired)³⁸ while at the same time not having to repudiate her journalistic experience, but

values, as a difference between the well written and the supremely well written' (pp. 492-93). Rather, the distinction is one based on the ephemerality of journalism and the permanence of literature, a difference which derives from the fact that journalism is written 'under the pressure of an immediate occasion' (p. 493), while 'only good style in conjunction with permanently interesting content can preserve' (p. 495).

³⁶ On New Journalism see James E. Murphy, *The New Journalism: A Critical Perspective*, *Journalism Monographs*, 34 (May 1974); and *The New Journalism, With an Anthology*, ed. by Tom Wolfe and E. W. Johnson (New York: Harper and Row, 1973). On the links between Fallaci and New Journalism see Santo L. Aricò, 'Oriana Fallaci's Journalistic Novel: *Niente e così sia*', in *Contemporary Women Writers in Italy: A Modern Renaissance*, ed. by Santo L. Aricò (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), pp. 170-82; further observations can be found in J. Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 29, p. 103 and p. 127.

³⁷ *Haunted Journeys*, p. 330.

³⁸ In one interview (P. Fallaci, 'Una donna chiamata Oriana', p. 25), Fallaci speaks of finding herself 'nel mondo irraggiungibile dei privilegiati, che, quando muoiono, restano vivi perchè di loro rimane un libro con la copertina rossa'. In another (C. Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', p. 217), she states: 'un giornale muore il giorno dopo, e poi va perduto, dimenticato. Un libro rimane, invece'.

rather being allowed to exploit the popularity it had bestowed upon her. Benedict Anderson has spoken of newspapers as ‘an “extreme form” of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity’, comparable to ‘one-day best-sellers’.³⁹ From this perspective, Fallaci appears to have moved from her best-selling interviews and reportages to books which are made of the same building blocks, but aspire to be more permanent and more literary — while remaining best-sellers. Of her first eight books, seven (*I sette peccati di Hollywood*, 1958; *Il sesso inutile: Viaggio intorno alla donna*, 1961; *Gli antipatici*, 1963; *Se il sole muore*, 1965; *Niente e così sia*, 1969; *Quel giorno sulla luna*, 1970; and *Intervista con la storia*, 1974) are constructed precisely in this way.⁴⁰ Whether she was writing about the vices and hypocrisies of Hollywood in the late fifties (in *I sette peccati di Hollywood*), about the conditions of women across four continents in the sixties (*Il sesso inutile*), about the adventure of the moon enterprise and the age of space travel (*Se il sole muore*), or about the horrors of the Vietnam war (*Niente e così sia*), the structure of the travelogue allowed Fallaci to re-write her reportages (most of the time already published in similar, but never identical, form in magazines such as *L'Europeo*), building into them both a narrative structure and a strong narratorial persona.⁴¹

Given the non-canonic and consequently relatively unregulated status of travel writing in the Italian literary system, this ‘invisible’ genre also offered Fallaci the possibility of escaping the constraints which a more codified ‘literary’ type often imposes. As a minor and hybrid genre, travel writing allowed her to enter the realm of literature without

³⁹ *Imagined Communities*, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁰ The exception is *Penelope alla guerra* (1962). All of Fallaci’s books were published by Rizzoli, except for *I sette peccati di Hollywood* (Milan: Longanesi, 1958); further details will be given when editions other than the first have been used.

⁴¹ The relationship between Fallaci’s articles and her books is analysed in detail in M. Milani, ‘La lingua “effimera” di Oriana Fallaci’, and S. Aricò, ‘Oriana Fallaci’s Journalistic Novel’; see below for further comments on this issue.

necessarily requiring her submission to its constraints, either in terms of content, form, or choice of audience. Hybridity is one of the characters most commonly mentioned in relation to travel writing by Anglo-American critics and authors. Paul Fussell, for instance, describes travel books as a 'double barrel' genre, and others have spoken of their border-crossing tendencies and generic androgyny.⁴² So in travel writing Fallaci found a vehicle for heterogeneous material: she could build into it elements of a personal *bildungsroman* together with the voices of others — the interviews with heads of state and matriarchs, the diaries of the Vietcong, the ramblings of terrified American soldiers and the poems of love-sick prisoners-of-war... The genre thus allowed her to maintain a connection between her experiences as a journalist and her aspirations as a writer. In short, it offered her a hyphen, or a double-barrel label, in Fussell's terminology.

The narrative persona of Fallaci, in particular, relies on the topos of travel as self-discovery and on the authority it bestows to the narrating voice. Exploiting the characteristics of a genre in which the author, the narrator and the protagonist coincide, Fallaci manages to remain constantly centre-stage, whether she is narrating her adventures as a roaming journalist, describing the 'characters' in her story, or meditating upon the meaning of life. And the seal of experience is constantly and openly invoked to authenticate both the facts she narrates and the feelings and passions she claims for herself. This reliance on experiential authority is, in fact, a further trait which travel writing shares with modern journalism, whose "liberal" tone' and 'claims to even-handedness' depend at least in part

⁴² See P. Fussell, *Abroad*, p. 202; and M. Kowalewski, 'Introduction', in *Temperamental Journeys*, ed. by M. Kowalewski, p. 7. See Chapter 2 above for a discussion of travel writing as minor literature and of its hybrid nature.

on 'the way in which certain signs have been fetishized within popular discourse', including 'the "authentic", the traditional and the local'.⁴³

The role of 'participant observer', sometimes attributed to Fallaci by sympathetic critics,⁴⁴ is also an important indication of her reliance on the 'rhetoric of otherness' typical of travel writing:⁴⁵ it points to the connection between travel and ethnographic practices, and to the recent disavowal, in both, of the myth of objectivity and 'pure' observation, noted, for instance, in the work of Mary Louise Pratt or James Clifford.⁴⁶ Fallaci is intentionally passionate about her writing, and denies any pretence of objectivity as a form of hypocrisy:

...dò [...] il mio personale punto di vista e mi guardo bene dall'ipocrita pretesa dell'obbiettività. Essa non esiste mai perché non può esistere. Quindi l'unica onesta soluzione è raccontare ciò che io ritengo verità. Con l'approccio che ritengo giusto. O forse dovrei dire col significato.⁴⁷

Personal involvement and participation, as well as the commitment to her moral (or even moralistic) principles,⁴⁸ are reflected in the constantly autobiographical character of Fallaci's writing, from the interviews collected in *Gli antipatici* and *Intervista con la storia*; to the fiction of *Penelope alla guerra* (a book of which she has said that it was born 'da un'esperienza simile a quella raccontata nel libro. Non uguale, simile. È diritto e dovere dello scrittore reinventare la realtà, ovvio. Giò, la protagonista, ero io a quel tempo');⁴⁹ to

⁴³ Gareth Griffiths, 'The Myth of Authenticity', in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, ed. by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 237-45 (p. 237).

⁴⁴ See for instance J. Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 28.

⁴⁵ See F. Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus*, pp. 212-59.

⁴⁶ The reference is, in particular, to M. L. Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places', and J. Clifford, 'On Ethnographic Authority'. See Chapter 3 above for a detailed discussion of this issue.

⁴⁷ Quoted in M. Milani, 'La lingua "effimera" di Oriana Fallaci', p. 25.

⁴⁸ Interviewed by Carrano (*Le signore grandi firme*, p. 102), Fallaci declared: 'La mia moralità, anche nel senso dei moralisti, è sempre stata a prova di bomba. E di questo sono molto fiera.'

⁴⁹ In P. Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, p. 81.

Un uomo, in which her biography of Panagulis becomes 'un capitolo della propria autobiografia'.⁵⁰ Travel books, however, offer Fallaci the perfect occasion for a sort of autobiographical writing which maintains a safe distance from the most intimate layers of personal life, favours relatively uncomplicated distinctions between good and evil, and also provides sufficient novelty and variety of topics to keep the reader interested, thus escaping the writer's obligation to reinvent reality. Yet at the same time, in Fallaci's more explicit travelogues (*I sette peccati di Hollywood*, *Il sesso inutile*, and especially *Se il sole muore* and *Niente e così sia*) the passionate personal involvement of the author and the need to communicate the Other (the attractively exotic as well as the unpleasantly unfamiliar), justify the use of narrative techniques typically associated with fiction, such as scene by scene development, the extensive use of symbolic representation and rhetorical devices such as repetition and anaphora, or the recurrence of figurative language — all of which are far less common in her newspaper and magazine articles.⁵¹ Travel books, in this sense, allow the journalist to become 'a writer' by producing what Milani has called a 'rielaborazione letteraria' of her articles, that is 'prosa scritta con fini artistici nella quale sia evidente la ricerca di miglioramento della lingua e dello stile'.⁵² The result are volumes which breach generic boundaries and employ the strategies and the materials of journalism, autobiography, 'faction' and traditional realist fiction — all held together by the powerful binding ingredient of travel.

If this is a recipe which could be easily recognized by Anglo-American publishers and critics, however, the same cannot be said of their Italian counterparts. In Italy hybrid genres are not popular among the critics, especially when they are characterized by popular

⁵⁰ Vittorio Spinazzola, 'Così si seduce un pubblico di massa', *L'Unità*, 6 December 1979, p. 12.

⁵¹ For a detailed analysis of these techniques, see the already mentioned articles by Milani and Aricò.

⁵² Milani, 'La lingua "effimera" di Oriana Fallaci', p. 24.

appeal. Vittorio Spinazzola has noted that 'in epoca contemporanea, è appunto contro l'ibridismo delle nuove forme di espressività bassa che insorgono le élites detentrici dei canoni di gusto altoborghesi'.⁵³ Both autobiographical inspiration and moralism — two characteristics Fallaci explicitly claims for her writing — are among the traits associated by traditional criticism with non-literary or para-literary texts. Spinazzola points out that 'tutta la paraletteratura non fa che sceneggiare il dissidio irriducibile di due forze antagoniste, per convenzione indicate come il Bene e il Male', so that, by implication, the simplification of the moral universe can be assumed as a revealing trait of non-literary writing (p. 153). Furthermore, according to Spinazzola:

il resocontismo si costituisce come luogo deputato per la separazione tra opere di finzione e no: vale a dire, tra narrativa propriamente detta e opere che traggono la loro funzione da interessi pratici e conoscitivi. Forma pura del resoconto è quella in cui l'autore si separa massimamente dalla collettività, facendosi storico di se stesso e assumendo dalla memoria personale una materia d'indole autobiografica. (p. 102)

Significantly, moralism and insistence on autobiographical narrative (often referred to as egocentric protagonism) are two of the most common accusations levelled at Fallaci by Italian critics, and they are often equated (or muddled) with lack of style and literary merit.⁵⁴ While Fallaci has repeatedly rebutted such accusations, her constant striving to 'write a great book' and her obsession with style indicate that this kind of critical reception

⁵³ V. Spinazzola, *La democrazia letteraria*, p. 159.

⁵⁴ On Fallaci's excessive protagonism see for instance Giorgi's portrait, quoted above, or the following statement by the writer Clara Sereni, in P. Mattei, 'Dicono di lei' (p. 4): 'Leggendo *Un uomo* ho avuto l'impressione, almeno in parte, di una utilizzazione fastidiosa del privato in chiave pubblica, [...] Quello che voglio dire è che non ha certo peccato di riservatezza. Per me i libri sono ancora qualcosa di diverso da un bene di consumo, mi piacerebbe fossero giudicati per quello che valgono.' Mario Barengi, on the other hand, premised his damning review of Fallaci's latest book, *Insciallah*, on the simplistic attitudes of the author, based on 'vitalismo irrazionalistico', on the 'monotono schema binario' which marks the psychology of all her characters, and on the 'ipoteca linguistico-ideologica d'un mai smentito protagonismo dell'autrice'; M. Barengi, 'Oriana e Omero', in *Tirature '91*, ed. by Vittorio Spinazzola (Turin: Einaudi, 1991), pp. 63-73 (pp. 66-69).

still matters to her. It would seem, in fact, that while Fallaci's literary models may be found in the Anglo-American genres of 'faction' and travel writing, her contradictions emerge from a thoroughly Italian background, in which her reception was subject to a predictable (because somewhat self-fulfilling) split between popular audiences and professional opinion.

(iii) Gendered personae

The 'rhetoric of otherness' which characterizes travel writing allows Fallaci to cross not only the barriers of genre, but also those of gender. Her first volume, *I sette peccati di Hollywood*, opens with an introduction signed by Orson Welles. The two-page portrait of Fallaci drawn by Welles, with its stereotypical characterization of feminine charms and vulnerability masking a sharp intelligence and an insidious personality, is emblematic of what was to follow:

La signorina Fallaci [...] sa nascondere la giornalista più agguerrita sotto la più ingannevole delle maschere femminili.

Anche Mata Hari era bella.

Ciascuna di queste due spie abili, nella sua epoca, ha sfruttato il ben noto pregiudizio maschile, che cioè nel cosiddetto sesso debole l'intelligenza sia riservata alle meno attraenti. [...] Mata Hari pagò a prezzi portentosi, compresa la vita, i segreti dell'esercito nemico. Sia detto a lode dell'autrice di questo libro che ella ottenne tutte le informazioni gratis; cosa ancor più straordinaria, la lasciammo stare e ripartire senza un graffio.⁵⁵

Similar chauvinist remarks, whether intended as compliments or not, followed Fallaci throughout her career. Yet, for all her outspoken refusal of feminine roles and stereotypes,

⁵⁵ O. Welles, 'Presentazione', in O. Fallaci, *I sette peccati di Hollywood*, pp. 11-12.

Fallaci not only allowed Welles' remarks to introduce her first volume, but deliberately and repeatedly fostered ambiguous gender characterizations of herself.

Starting from *Il sesso inutile*, Oriana Fallaci manipulates her persona and her image so as to produce not just a 'generic androgyny' for her books but also an ambiguously androgynous image for herself. In this and subsequent volumes, Italy represents the old world of family and femininity, while the author/protagonist's travels are the location of gender experimentation: they provide the opportunity for professional development, independence and emancipation; they allow her to break dress codes, share in male camaraderie and bravado, and perform feats of bravery usually associated with male heroism; and they also offer her the chance of complete role reversals, both in the professional and the private sphere.

This kind of boundary-breaking is not altogether unusual if we read Fallaci's books in the context of travel writing: travel is one of the areas in which women have traditionally been able to break away from the narrow boundaries of their social roles and stereotypical images. And travel writing, with its combination of autobiography and adventure, personal experience and exotic settings, has provided for some time a route through which women writers could escape the narrow confines of the private and the familiar.⁵⁶ As noted by

⁵⁶ On the subject of women's travel writing see S. L. Blake, 'A Woman's Trek'; E. A. Bohls, *Women Travel Writers and the Language of Aesthetics*; *Viaggio e scrittura: Le straniere nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, ed. by Liliana Borghi, Nicoletta Livi Bacci, Uta Treder (Florence: Libreria delle donne, 1988); K. R. Lawrence, *Penelope Voyages*; S. Mills, *Discourses of Difference*; Mary Russell, *The Blessings of a Good Thick Skirt: Women Travellers and Their World* (London: Collins, 1986). On the rise of women's writing and the issue of private versus public genres see *Il racconto delle donne: Voci, autobiografie e figurazioni*, ed. by Angelina Arru and Maria Teresa Chialant (Naples: Liguori, 1990); Dinah Birch, 'Gender and Genre', in *Imaging Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, ed. by Frances Bonner and others (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 43-55; Olga Kenyon, *800 Years of Women's Letters* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1992); Elisabetta Rasy, *La lingua della nutrice: Percorsi e tracce dell'espressione femminile* (Rome: Edizioni delle donne, 1978); *Tradition in Transition: Women Writers, Marginal Texts, and the Eighteenth-Century Canon*, ed. by Alvaro Ribeiro and James G. Basker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). On Italian women writers and their fortune see E. Rasy, *Le donne e la letteratura*; Marina Zancan, *Il doppio itinerario della scrittura* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998).

Karen R. Lawrence, however, the peculiarity of women's travel writing is that Penelope, traditionally the figure of Home, takes the place of Ulysses, and thus becomes both 'traveler and weaver of the tale'; she is 'a kind of wild card; outside the narrative "at the theoretical position", she nevertheless is *in* the narrative as well'.⁵⁷ 'Weaver and unweaver, constructor and deconstructor, woman as traveler and storyteller might be said to break the law of boundaries' (p. 10), to the point that she acquires some of the androgynous, hermaphrodite qualities of Hermes 'the guide of travelers and protector of boundaries, trickster, translator, messenger (and ancestor of Odysseus)' (p. 7). Penelope/Hermes becomes 'a figure for the slipperiness of boundaries between inside and outside, male and female, domestic and exotic' (pp. 9-10).

Exploiting the opportunities offered by the travel book, Fallaci built for herself the image of a travelling Penelope with a taste for turning into Ulysses when one least expects it. In her first novel, *Penelope alla guerra*, the trope of travel and the ambiguous utopia/dystopia of America become the motif and theme, respectively, of her first attempt at openly (though imaginatively) autobiographical fiction.⁵⁸ And a Penelope who shares many of the ambiguous traits of Hermes becomes the figure of the young protagonist Giovanna, who is sent to America to write film scripts and undergoes a trip of self discovery during which she changes her name to the sexually ambiguous Giò, learns to wear trousers, loses her virginity to a childhood sweetheart who turns out to be bi-sexual, and eventually returns

⁵⁷ *Penelope Voyages*, p. xiii and p. 9. Lawrence draws on Michel Serres, *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, ed. by Josué V. Harari and David Bell (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

⁵⁸ On the role of travel in *Penelope alla guerra*, see Franca Agnello-Modica, 'L'opera narrativa di Oriana Fallaci', PhD Thesis, Wisconsin - Madison (1991), pp. 52-54.

home having forsaken both her illusions about the new world and the innocence (or naiveté) which used to allow her to fit into the old one.⁵⁹

Yet if travel writing has contributed to produce 'a more dynamic model of woman as agent, as self-mover' and has 'provided discursive space for women',⁶⁰ it is also true that conventional images are never completely relinquished.⁶¹ Fallaci does not escape this logic: in *Penelope alla guerra* her ephebic looks are the subject of constant reminders to the reader, yet the cover of the book (both in the Italian and the English edition) shows extremely feminine and seductive images of the author as a young woman wearing black eyeliner and a very proper string of pearls. In Fallaci's travel books, the androgynous look (which was made famous by the cover of her Vietnam book, *Niente e così sia*, in which she appears in military uniform and childlike plaits) is only part of the traveller's disguise.⁶² Cross-dressing is, after all, a traditional feature of women's travel writing, as is the play on gendered images and roles. As a traveller among strangers Fallaci can allow herself the

⁵⁹ Fallaci herself pointed out the peculiarities of her Penelope/Giò in an interview with her sister (P. Fallaci, 'E spiccò il volo. Poi venne la tragedia'). Having described the novel as '[un] libro interessante in senso femminista' (p. 20), Fallaci points out that her protagonist is fighting for more than the right for equality: 'Penelope si batte per qualcosa di più: per il rifiuto della verginità intesa come virtù, insomma per l'uguaglianza sessuale. Pensa alla scena in cui, per un atto di volontà anzi di libertà e non per un atto d'amore, va a letto con un uomo per la prima volta. Perché a piangere, dopo la deflorazione, non è lei, ma l'uomo' (p. 21). Elsewhere, Fallaci compares her work as a journalist to Ulysses' travels, implicitly identifying her persona as a writer with Penelope. Asked whether she still feels the need to communicate with her public via her articles, she replies: 'Lo sento, sebbene abbia ancora tanti libri da scrivere. Lo sento ogni volta che le sirene chiamano Ulisse legato all'albero maestro della sua nave: "Ulisseee! Vieni Ulisseee! Vieni a vedere che succede in Iran! Vieni a vedere che succede in Cambogia! [...]" E sono momenti in cui spaccherei le funi con cui mi sono legata anche se fossero d'acciaio, di titanio' (C. Sabelli Fioretti, 'Il ritorno di Oriana', p. 231).

⁶⁰ Lawrence, *Penelope Travels*, p. 18.

⁶¹ Lawrence writes: 'Travel literature, [...] by both men and women writers, explores not only potential freedoms but also cultural constraints; it provides a kind of imaginative resistance to its own plot. In flights of the imagination, as well as on the road, home is, of course, never totally left behind. Indeed, the very search for the new in the literature of travel is itself conventional [...] That is why travel literature explores a tension between the thrilling possibilities of the unknown and the weight of the familiar, between a desire for escape and a sense that one can never be outside a binding cultural network' (p. 19).

⁶² A more radical example of the kind of freedom and opportunity for gender-crossing allowed by travel writing is to be found, in contemporary Italian literature, in the work of Aldo Busi; on Busi see Massimo Bacigalupo, 'Aldo Busi: Writer, Jester and Moral Historian', in *The New Italian Novel*, ed. by Z. Baranski and L. Pertile, pp. 35-42; and Filippo La Porta, *La nuova narrativa italiana: Travestimenti e stili di fine secolo* (Turin, Bollati Boringhieri, 1995), pp. 52-58.

luxury of a 'double sexuality'.⁶³ In *Se il sole muore*, for instance, Fallaci describes her friendship with the astronauts she had gone to interview as a sort of flirtatious camaraderie, in which she is addressed as 'dolly' while also being granted the honorary title of 'fratello'.⁶⁴ In *Niente e così sia*, on the other hand, Fallaci is perfectly happy to register the special attentions she receives as a woman in a military environment, but only in order to strike back with a vengeance at the idiocy of the men bestowing them upon her: the general who gallantly offers her the use of his private bathroom, and then blushes and runs away in a panic when caught naked under the shower;⁶⁵ the pilot who would like to seduce her (or, more probably, just to convince his friends that the seduction has taken place), and ends up taking her for a night flight in a plane with empty fuel tanks... (pp. 298-301); and many others.

Yet though Penelope/Oriana may play with androgyny, she is actually anchored to quite traditional images of femininity and masculinity, and while 'abroad' (especially when represented by the infernal mayhem of war or the futuristic land of the space age) may be the place of experimentation and confusion, Fallaci, like any good traveller, regularly returns 'home' to a safe and even stereotypical vision of gender. So she is on record saying that all the men who loved her liked her to wear trousers and dress like a man; or that journalists interviewing her sometimes surreptitiously tried to discover whether she was a lesbian, not daring to ask the question openly, but clearly hinting at the fact that everyone assumed she was.⁶⁶ Yet not only is Fallaci not a lesbian, but her attitudes to homosexuality have been put under scrutiny and revealed to be quite prejudiced. In *Penelope alla guerra*

⁶³ On this subject see for instance A. Behdad, *Belated Travelers*, pp. 113-32.

⁶⁴ *Se il sole muore*, Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 11th edn (Milan: Rizzoli, 1996); see for instance the dialogues on p. 420, p. 424, and p. 435.

⁶⁵ *Niente e così sia*, 60th edn (Milan: Rizzoli, 1990), p. 23.

⁶⁶ See Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, p. 101 and pp. 77-78.

homosexuality and bisexuality are treated as a dirty and shocking secret, 'an empty space in the narrative discourse',⁶⁷ whose disclosure is never complete, as if even mention of the word might be too much for the author and her public; and in *Insciallah*, Fallaci's latest novel, set in the context of the Lebanese war, homosexuality is arbitrarily associated with the most negative and the most irresolute of the characters.⁶⁸ In Fallaci's personal ideology, 'real' men are heroes with public lives, such as the adventurous Jack London, who was her first idol, or the protagonists of the Italian Resistance, with whom she grew up and identified, or her 'brothers' the astronauts, and her lover Alekos Panagulis. Women, on the other hand, are exploited and frustrated: her only female model, her mother, is a negative one ('la mamma era tutto il contrario di quel che volevo essere nella mia vita. [...] Io non volevo imitare la mamma, volevo vendicarla').⁶⁹ In her private life, she combines a refusal of formal ties such as marriage with total commitment to a vision of monogamous heterosexual love.⁷⁰ As a journalist, Fallaci refuses 'le fanfare del vittimismo tanto caro alle donne che entrano in un mondo di uomini',⁷¹ and sets herself up to demonstrate that 'una donna può fare un mestiere che si riteneva adatto agli uomini e basta'.⁷² She resents being asked whether her brand of journalism is specifically feminine, or whether she writes for a female, rather than a male, reader.⁷³ *Il sesso inutile*, her only book explicitly devoted to the

⁶⁷ Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 57; see also pp. 47-52.

⁶⁸ See Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, pp. 162-63.

⁶⁹ P. Fallaci, 'Una donna chiamata Oriana', p. 20.

⁷⁰ Asked whether she had ever contemplated married life, Fallaci once answered: 'io non ho mai pensato di fare la moglie. Mai, nemmeno da bambina. Io ho sempre pensato di amare un uomo che mi amasse: è tutta un'altra cosa. L'amore sì, è sempre rientrato nei miei sogni e nei miei desideri, e da bambina pensavo addirittura che avrei amato un uomo e basta per sempre. Un uomo, non un marito. La faccenda del marito mi dava fastidio, fin da allora. Mi faceva paura. [...] E v'erano giorni in cui stavo lì a pensare il modo di sfuggire a quell'imposizione del marito e del cognome e del vestito bianco, e fare ciò che mamma mi aveva detto: "Non sposarti!". Non sono mai stata fidanzata. [...] Ho amato alcuni uomini, la faccenda dell'uomo unico da amare per tutta la vita purtroppo m'è andata male, ma ciascuno l'ho amato in libertà e senza impegni, sebbene a ciascuno sia stata totalmente e rigidamente fedele' (Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, pp. 76-77).

⁷¹ P. Fallaci, 'E spiccò il volo. Poi venne la tragedia', pp. 16-17.

⁷² Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, p. 83.

⁷³ Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, p. 83 and p. 92.

subject of women and their condition, opens with a declaration of disapproval for all attempts to consider women as a special category, and Fallaci explains that she nearly gave up the opportunity to travel round the world when she was told that if she accepted she would have to write reportages specifically about the female condition.⁷⁴ She also describes herself as first and foremost a human being, a person, not a woman, and in Italian, a language which marks grammatical gender, she systematically uses masculine titles such as 'il giornalista' or 'lo scrittore' for herself.⁷⁵

Such attitudes, coupled with Fallaci's conscious self-fashioning on American models, were bound to be particularly unpopular in Italy, where the co-presence of her narrative persona (marked by the systematic crossing of traditional boundaries) with her outspoken declarations in everyday life, made an association between the 'real' and the 'fictional' Fallaci particularly easy, favouring her dismissal as an egotistic, self-centred exhibitionist, ready to do anything in order to promote herself. Elsewhere, on the other hand, her combative stance and frequent outbursts could simply be explained on the basis of the prevailing stereotype of the fiery and vindictive Italian, and dismissed as quirky and somewhat quaint — as in the already mentioned characterization of Fallaci as an 'Italian spitfire'. Her foreign admirers did not need to identify with all traits of Fallaci's character, since her 'Italianità' could act as a useful distancing device and safely allow her less attractive side to be treated as alien and even picturesque.

In Italy, on the other hand, Fallaci's refusal to adopt female models and her stern individualism alienated her, in particular, from the feminist movement which, at the time of Fallaci's greatest popularity, was directing its efforts mainly towards the development of

⁷⁴ O. Fallaci, *Il sesso inutile*, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁵ This habit is particularly evident in the interview with Carrano, where the interviewer describes Fallaci in the feminine and Fallaci uses the masculine in her answers. See pp. 73-75 in particular.

strategies for collective political action and ideals of female solidarity, and was beginning to develop what has since become known as 'il pensiero della differenza'.⁷⁶ Furthermore, *Lettera a un bambino mai nato*, written by Fallaci at a time when abortion was a major social issue in Italy, lent itself to exploitation by the catholic anti-abortionist forces and further alienated Fallaci from the feminist movement.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Fallaci's own attitude towards feminism is at least ambivalent: she maintains that she instinctively lived and behaved as a feminist, but gained an awareness of the women's movement very late, then only to become quickly disillusioned with it when she realized 'che il movimento femminista non era femminista e che il concetto di femminismo era un concetto da rivedere e da reinventare'.⁷⁸ She repeatedly accused women of being their own (and her) worst enemies, attacking mainstream feminists for transforming the women's movement into a fashionable but insubstantial label, and for not practising what they preached.⁷⁹ For these and similar attitudes, Fallaci has also been described as a post-feminist ante litteram, or (probably more accurately, though just as anachronistically) as a backlash, revisionist feminist à la Camille Paglia.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ On the Italian women's movement and its evolution during the period in question see Adriana Seroni, *La questione femminile in Italia: 1970-77* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1977); *I movimenti femministi in Italia*, ed. by Rosalba Spagnoletti (Rome: Savelli, 1978). On 'pensiero della differenza' see *Italian Feminist Thought*, ed. by Paola Bono and Sandra Kemp (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

⁷⁷ Though the author did not mean the book to be partisan, it was hijacked not only in Italy, but also, and perhaps more radically, abroad: Fallaci herself, for instance, remarked that in Poland a Catholic magazine had published an unauthorized translation of the volume; see P. Fallaci, 'E spiccò il volo. Poi venne la tragedia', p. 21.

⁷⁸ Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, pp. 98-99.

⁷⁹ Of one of the protagonists of American feminism Fallaci said: 'Ho conosciuto Betty Friedan, quella che passa per il Mosè del femminismo, e mi sono cascate le braccia. "I want a husband! I want a husband! Voglio un marito!" gridava piagnucolando. Ma come è possibile!?' And of lesbian feminists she stated that they are 'le più coerenti', but also 'le più irragionevoli, e le meno credibili proprio perché sono lesbiche. Poiché prescindono dagli uomini e odiano gli uomini e sono le prime a non capire che la rivoluzione femminista non si può fare senza gli uomini' (Carrano, *Le signore grandi firme*, p. 99).

⁸⁰ Agnello-Modica, 'L'opera narrativa di Oriana Fallaci', p. v, and Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 5, respectively.

John Gatt-Rutter has suggested that Fallaci's ambivalence towards gender models could be explained as a case of 'immasculation' (a phenomenon described as 'the notion of women having to match or surpass male manliness') and he has compared her to Aphra Behn, for her tendency to take patriarchy too much in her stride, and the subsequent risk of ending up looking like a male impersonator.⁸¹ Fallaci, in fact, does not so much defy traditional images of sexuality and gender roles, but rather adopts for herself a stereotypically masculine public persona, while at the same time reserving the right to move back to just as stereotypical female images and behaviour whenever needed.⁸² The same contradictory mixture can be found among her critics. Thus Domenico Porzio offers a portrait of her as a the customary 'gatta selvatica e unghiata', but then adds: 'L'Oriana è quella che è per rabbia. Fin da ragazzina d'essere nata donna non si dette pace: e fu quando scopri che i maschi avevano organizzato il mondo tutto a loro comodo; [...] Considerato che donna era nata, stabilì che a tutti i costi sarebbe diventata almeno uoma.'⁸³ Mauro Mancioti mixes all sorts of clichés, describing Fallaci as 'maliziosa e maligna quanto può esserlo una giornalista intelligente e fiorentina di nascita' or 'questa diabolica provocatrice in gonnella', talking of her 'più che virile risolutezza', and issuing warnings such as the following: 'Da non fidarsi, come per la maggior parte delle donne, di questa Oriana. Si presenta impassibile, [...] Poi, pone le domande più intriganti, imbarazzanti e impertinenti. [...]

⁸¹ Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 5; Gatt-Rutter draws the notion of immasculation from Judith Fetterley, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), while comments on Behn are derived from C. Gallagher, 'The Networking Muse: Aphra Behn as Heroine of Frankness and Self-Discovery', *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 September 1993, pp. 3-4.

⁸² Significantly, this happens especially when she wants to re-build some private space for herself: at the apex of her fame, Fallaci declared 'non sta bene raccontare i propri sentimenti, ammenoché non lo si faccia come l'ho fatto in *Un uomo* dove ho spiegato anche politicamente il mio amore per Alekos e il suo per me'; and stated that, although her biography is inscribed in all her books, this is something she did 'senza accorgermene, senza volerlo. [...] Perché sebbene non abbia mai nascosto il mio legame con un uomo, ho sempre avuto questo pudore per la mia vita privata: addirittura una nausea a sbandierare le mie scelte affettive, i miei sentimenti personali' (P. Fallaci, 'E spiccò il volo. Poi venne la tragedia', p. 23).

⁸³ D. Porzio, 'Oriana Fallaci', in *Primi Piani* (Milan: Mondadori, 1976), pp. 177-80 (pp. 178-79).

Insomma, una specie di peste.’⁸⁴ Claudio Marabini, on the other hand, reviewing *Un uomo*, opts for totally feminine stereotypes, writing that ‘la Fallaci resta donna, [...] la donna prevale sulla scrittrice e la schiaccia, e [...] in questa donna ribollono passioni, idee, risentimenti, amori incontrollabili dalle forme dell’arte’; as a consequence, Marabini maintains, ‘la Fallaci cede al gusto del rotocalco o dell’antico romanzo d’appendice’.⁸⁵

Hardly any woman has spoken out to defend Fallaci against the evident chauvinism of such remarks. An exception is Fiamma Nirenstein who, having enumerated the typical accusations levelled at Fallaci (‘Pazza, isterica, sessuomane, insopportabile, bugiarda, egocentrica ... e qualcuno ha detto “Una donna sola, quale prova migliore del suo squilibrio psichico? Della sua asocialità?”’), exhorted the readers of *Noidonne* to recognize the common trait unifying all these epithets:

A voi che avete “fatto”, come si dice, il femminismo, o che l’avete, magari, vissuto anche senza “farlo”, [...] non suona un campanello di allarme di fronte alle masse di aggettivi negativi che sono stati usati per Oriana? Non era un tipico disvalore antifemminista che una donna si infilasse in una vita di solitudine, in una tana dove un marito, un amante, uno straccio di famiglia non può trovar posto?

E quella storia dell’isterismo non era, ai miei tempi, una maniera per sanzionare una sensibilità acuta, incapace di nascondersi dietro alle buone maniere, così come l’accusa di essere un po’ maniche sessuali nascondeva una *prouderie* nata e coltivata sotto i più diversi segni, da quello cattolico a quello comunista? E, su, via, deve poi dare ai nervi il protagonismo di una donna che si è messa a tu per tu con i potenti [...]?’⁸⁶

If the isolated exhortations of Fiamma Nirenstein are indicative of Fallaci’s lack of popularity among Italian feminists, what is even more interesting is to notice that all ‘accusations’ levelled at Fallaci on the grounds of gender, whether they come from men or

⁸⁴ M. Mancioti, ‘Una giornalista contesta i potenti: Le “Interviste con la storia” di Oriana Fallaci’, *Il Secolo XIX*, 13 June 1974, p. 3.

⁸⁵ C. Marabini, ‘Panagulis, amore mio’.

⁸⁶ F. Nirenstein, ‘Lei sì che mi piace: Ebbene dico sì a Oriana’, *Noidonne*, 41.6 (June 1986), 37.

women, and whether they concern excessive romanticism or hysteria, primadonna fits or perfidious duplicity, stubborn refusal of feminist principles or antisocial behaviour, suspected homosexuality or homophobia, seem to be part of a pattern: they signal a tendency to identify Fallaci the woman, with Fallaci the writer, Fallaci the narrator, and Fallaci the protagonist of her own adventures. The ambiguous sexual persona Fallaci created for herself in her articles and, most of all, in her books also 'spills over', as we have seen, into her real life: the autobiographical nature of her writing, and the public dimension it bestows on her behaviour and character, encourage the identification and superimposition of her narrative persona and her real self. Together with her critics, Fallaci herself seems to fall into this trap, perhaps spurred on by the need to provide her readers with a suitably colourful character for a best-selling author.⁸⁷ Generic choices, however, also play a part: just as travel writing, notwithstanding its potential for fiction-like adventure and escape from 'normality', subsumes author, narrator and protagonist into one and the same figure, so the reader (even the professional one) is tempted to transpose the equation into real life. Genre expectations come back with a vengeance, and if the pact with the reader stipulates that all autobiographical tales (including those narrated in travel books) should be validated on the basis of experiential authority, then the writer cannot pull back from the tale and expect some degree of autonomy from her constructed persona. As Mark Cocker has pointed out in relation to the works of Gavin Maxwell, there are serious dangers in non-fiction writing: the narrative may easily exhaust its own subject matter, or force the writer

⁸⁷ The need for popular authors to establish a powerful image for themselves is highlighted by Dudovitz (*The Myth of Superwoman*, pp. 40-41) who points out that the reader often 'buys the book because of the author' — hence the habit of featuring pictures of him or her on the jacket cover. As far as Italian best-sellers are concerned, Alberto Cadioli ('La strategia dei best-seller', p. 223) has observed: 'l'autore deve diventare "personaggio", ed è necessario che la sua opera sfondi le barriere culturali dei lettori perché il successo possa stabilizzarsi e il nome dello scrittore si collochi tra quelli "da ricordare" (e quindi da riconoscere all'apparire del libro successivo).'

into ‘a kind of public obligation for maintaining the fiction’.⁸⁸ In either case, ‘the interdependence of life and work in the art of the non-fictional author can compel her or him to virtual paradoxes’, including ‘the chore of escape, premeditated adventure’ (p. 131) — and, in the case of Fallaci, the need to keep up with her gender-crossing persona. Her volumes and their popular success seem to fit perfectly with Bourdieu’s assertion that ‘the titles and authors favoured by the best-seller readership will vary from country to country, but in each case there will be a preponderance of the life stories and memoirs of exemplary heroes of bourgeois success or “non fiction novels”’.⁸⁹ But in Fallaci’s case, and given her choice of genres, she had to offer her own complicity in fashioning herself, not just her characters, as an above-average woman — an ‘immasculated’ superwoman.

(iv) Editing, Rewriting, Translating

Oriana Fallaci’s choice of language strategies can also be read in the light of the characteristics of travel writing as a genre. The multiple layers of translation implicit in travel writing are in great evidence in most of her books, which, through the substantial use of a pastiche of different languages and voices, highlight the fact that they originate from the experiences of a widely travelled, cosmopolitan and multilingual protagonist/author.

Most of Fallaci’s volumes display a founding paradox: they are, from their very inception, written in translation. Their origins are in dialogues and experiences which took place in a language other than the one in which they are reported, and if this is a trait common to most travel books, what is original is the way in which Fallaci makes the

⁸⁸ *Loneliness and Time*, p. 127.

⁸⁹ *Distinction*, p. xii; on the frequency of exceptional female characters in best-sellers written by women see Dudovitz, *The Myth of Superwoman*, pp. 11-17 and pp. 157-86.

process evident, by overtly referring to it: her Italian prose is interspersed with phrases, expletives, exclamations and brief exchanges in a variety of 'local languages' (mostly English, but also French — including argot —, Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, ...). The technique adopted by Fallaci usually consists in presenting the reader with the 'foreign' passage, immediately followed by a repetition of the same sentence or phrase in Italian translation. Most of the time this strategy signals the fact that the whole conversation took place in the local language, and we are to assume that the author/protagonist is proficient enough to have both participated in the exchange and produced a faithful translation for her readers. Yet Fallaci does not even shy away from introducing the figure of her interpreters, whenever necessary: in *Niente e così sia* her dialogues with North-Vietnamese prisoners are prefaced by remarks such as 'Il tenente Phuc serviva da interprete', and the intermediary is even granted a role of some importance in the communication process.⁹⁰ Even multiple layers of translation are explicitly referred to: when, during her visit to the prison camp, Fallaci hears a compelling song, she immediately gives the first line in Vietnamese, and then, before producing the whole text in Italian, she informs the reader: 'Allora ho aperto il magnetofono e l'ho registrata e me la son fatta tradurre in francese, ed ecco: cantavano questo.' (pp. 292-93)

The function of this kind of polylinguism is, in most cases, to validate the claims to authenticity made by the text. At the same time, the strategy tends to raise the prestige of the author by underlying either her command of foreign languages or, at least, her control of a potentially difficult communicative situation. When the action is set in the USA, as in *Se il sole muore*, the use of English acquires particular significance: while Fallaci only rarely assumes that her Italian readers will understand English, her own familiarity with it, and the

⁹⁰ About Phuc, for instance, Fallaci adds: 'Ci ha impiegato un bel po' per calmarla' (*Niente e così sia*, p. 290).

increasingly colloquial nature of most of the expressions used in the volume, tend to stress the symbolic values attached to all things American (such as modernity, freedom, informality, and so on)⁹¹ and the fact that the author is gradually shifting her allegiances towards this 'new' world and away from her 'old' European identity.⁹²

In some cases, however, the use of pastiche aims at completely different effects. In *Niente e così sia*, for instance, it is sometimes deployed as a rhetorical device, to single out (through an arresting discontinuity and a subsequent repetition in translation) moments of particular significance — as in the case of the confrontation between the cruel General Loan and François Pelou, head of France Presse in Saigon:

Si sono fissati. Occhi negli occhi. Per due o tre lunghi secondi. Poi François ha mosso le labbra, e n'è uscita una voce di ghiaccio.

“Tu vas m'arrêter? Vuoi arrestarmi?”

Loan ha dischiuso l'enorme bocca, in una smorfia che voleva apparire un sorriso. Ha piegato la testa sulla spalla, dolcemente. Ha soffiato la sua cantilena.

“Pour toi, c'est une balle dans la tête. Per te, è una pallottola in testa.” (p. 137)

At other times, the mixing of languages becomes a distancing device, a weapon which can at once highlight the indifference of the Western masses to the Vietnam war, the hypocrisy of the media, or the serious flaws in a specific character, by allowing the reader and the narrator to dissociate themselves from a scene, and by transforming drama into parody. This happens in the case of the New York bank manager greeting Fallaci on her return from Saigon (“Non l'abbiamo vista per molto tempo.” “Ero in Vietnam.” “Really?

⁹¹ On the image of America in Italian culture and literature of the same period see for instance Donald Heiney, *America in Modern Italian Literature* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1964); Giuseppe Massara, *Viaggiatori italiani in America* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1976); Umberto Eco, Gian Paolo Ceserani, and Beniamino Placido, *La riscoperta dell'America* (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1984); and Ugo Rubeo, *Mal d'America: Da mito a realtà* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1987).

⁹² In the last chapter the author/protagonist tells her addressee: ‘Ero tornata a New York, naturalmente. Tu sai che ormai sto più là che qua: la mia scelta è fatta’ (*Se il sole muore*, p. 483).

How exciting. Davvero? Eccitante.” (p. 113)); in that of the insidious Barry Zorthian, surreptitiously interrogating Oriana (““Darling, sei comunista?””; ““Lo so che sei una brava ragazza. A good girl.”” (pp. 168-69)), and, most of all, in the description of the after-dinner meetings on the roof terrace of the Caravelle, the tallest hotel in Saigon:

Sulla terrazza vi sono sedie, tavolini, e i camerieri in giacca bianca portano whisky, gelato, caffè. Proprio come a Roma, a New York. I frequentatori sono americani, francesi, giornalisti, diplomatici, funzionari che ci vengono insieme alle mogli. Profumate, pettinate, in minigonna. “Ça va, chérie?” “Darling, how do you do?” “Il faut, il faut che vous veniez déjeuner avec nous cette semaine!” “You must, you absolutely must have a drink at our place!” E ridono, si fanno le feste: sembra d’essere a teatro. Ma *siamo* a teatro. La platea è la terrazza del Caravelle e il palcoscenico è Saigon in agonia. (pp. 268-69)

Here the pastiche (this time presented without the customary Italian translation) highlights the irrelevance of the conversation, while the image of the theatre underlines the scopophilia implicit in the behaviour of these foreigners, absent-mindedly contemplating the destruction of Saigon from their roof terrace, just as tourists would contemplate a picturesque view from the commanding position of their hotel balcony.⁹³

A further function played by polylinguism (or by explicit references to translation and interpretation) is that of introducing and giving plausibility to other ‘voices’. Fallaci’s prose tends to abound in dialogue, and, in some cases, it even includes entire sections made up of documents by different ‘authors’. *Niente e così sia* is the volume in which this

⁹³ Notwithstanding such techniques, however, Fallaci’s book was itself accused of scopophilia, and of exploiting the macabre attraction of war — a technique which, some said, she had learnt from her friend and mentor, Curzio Malaparte (see C. Cederna, ‘Madame veleno e i calzini di Panagulis’, p. 3). In fact, scopophilia and linguistic pastiche are certainly not incompatible in Fallaci’s work, and both devices are brought to an extreme in her latest novel, *Insciallah*, where Italian is broken up by passages in English, French, Arabic, Latin and a variety of Italian dialects, and images of violence, death and mutilation are a regular feature (see Giorgi, ‘Parlar di guerra fa bene alla guerra’, p. 85; Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 148). On scopophilia and travel writing see Porter, *Haunted Journeys*, pp. 166-67. The issue of gaze in journalism is discussed by Spurr (*The Rhetoric of Empire*, pp. 13-27) who also refers specifically to reports on Vietnam (p. 15). On the role of the gaze in Western travel writing see also M. L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 201-27.

technique is most predominant, and most compelling: twenty-five pages are occupied by Fallaci's transcription/translation of the diaries of two Vietcong; and the text also incorporates songs, press releases, interviews, and other 'authentic' material. The technique, which is typical of reportage, manages to convey a compelling sense of urgency and to involve the reader in the narration of the events. The effect is compounded by the fact that most of the narration is in diary form, uses the present tense and abounds in direct speech. The overall result is that of placing the reader in the role of a direct witness, encouraging his or her identification with the author/narrator.

Intimacy with the reader is also fostered by Fallaci through the use of direct addresses to an internal narratee, apostrophized as 'tu'. This narratee can be explicitly identified (as in the case of *Se il sole muore*, written by Fallaci in the form of a letter to her father, or *Un uomo*, which is addressed to the dead Panagulis), or remain vague (as in *Niente e così sia*, where either Fallaci's youngest sister, or the journalist François Pelou, or the author herself can, at different times, be identified with 'tu'). It has been noticed that, when it works, the use of an internal addressee functions as an invitation for the reader to identify with the addressee and forge a direct bond with the author: that 'tu' becomes at once the privileged spectator of events, the confidante to whose ears meditations, confessions and ammonitions are destined, and the vicarious addressee of the moral lessons to be drawn from each experience.⁹⁴ When it does not work, however, direct apostrophe runs the risk of being perceived by the reader as tiresomely redundant, and even patronizing. In *Se il sole muore*, for instance, the constant refrain of rhetorical questions ('ricordi, papà?'), exhortations ('ed ora stai attento, papà: il film non è facile'), rebuttals

⁹⁴ See G. Rosa, 'Il nome di Oriana', p. 57 and pp. 63-64; M. Barengi, 'Oriana e Omero', p. 68; J. Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 141 and p. 177.

(‘Ecco. Questa fu la risposta alla tua risposta, papà.’), and explanations (‘Questo libro è un diario, papà, il diario di un anno della mia vita e io te lo offro per continuare il discorso che aprimmo su quella goccia di luce’)⁹⁵ can alienate the reader rather than encourage his or her identification with the narratee.

The same happens to other features of Fallaci’s prose, such as the frequent use of repetition, parallelism, anaphora and inversion. And her love of Florentine mannerisms (for instance, truncated verb forms such as ‘vo’, for ‘vado’, or ‘fo’, instead of ‘faccio’) can be perceived as gratuitous, especially when the expressions in question are supposedly uttered by an American astronaut or a Vietnamese prisoner.⁹⁶

Fallaci’s excessive rhetorical emphasis and her heavy reliance on immediate effect are among the most common stylistic flaws cited by critics who maintain that her works are of subliterate standard. Marisa Milani, for instance, concludes her analysis of *Niente e così sia* with the following remarks:

Dell’oratoria (di una oratoria di tono popolare, a volte populistico, da predicatore) la sua prosa ha alcuni tratti fondamentali: il continuo parallelismo, l’anafora assillante, l’onnipresente colon ternario [...]

È evidente la simmetria esasperata della composizione a cui la Fallaci non sa sottrarsi, e alla quale anzi indulge, soprattutto nei momenti in cui più spiegata si fa l’enfasi cantilenante della confessione, dell’invettiva o della preghiera. E di oratoria sa anche il dialogo, sia diretto sia indiretto e indiretto libero, usatissimo quest’ultimo con effetti spesso interessanti e variamente adoperato in alternanza o in continuazione con quello diretto, in un continuo soffocante discorso col lettore, sempre aggredito sollecitato blandito con l’onnipresente *tu*, e al quale non viene concessa possibilità di replica, perché quel *tu* è anche e soprattutto *io*.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ *Se il sole muore*, p. 11, p. 55, p. 31, p. 15 respectively.

⁹⁶ On this subject see Milani, ‘La lingua “effimera” di Oriana Fallaci’, pp. 32-33.

⁹⁷ Milani, ‘La lingua “effimera” di Oriana Fallaci’, pp. 46-49.

Milani notices that the rhetoric is much more pronounced in the volume than in the original articles written by Fallaci about Vietnam. Yet for most Italian critics *Niente e così sia* is still, stylistically, one of the least offensive of Fallaci's books, while it is especially in *Un uomo* and *Insciallah* that she is accused of mounting the "trampoli" retorici di un dannunzianesimo aggiornato' to produce a prose marked by 'patetismo enfatico' and 'incapace di raggiungere uno stile, senza il quale, tutti sanno, non si dà grande libro e tanto meno grande romanzo'.⁹⁸

It is precisely in this heavily rhetorical quality of her Italian prose that we can find a further explanation of Fallaci's greater critical success outside Italy. Like many travel books, her writings have 'travelled' in translation and have been at least partly re-moulded to suit the needs of new audiences. Editing, rewriting and translating proper are all in evidence in the English language versions of Fallaci's books, but given the importance of marketing strategies in the success of her works, and her tendency to maintain some direct control over all phases of publication, it is difficult to establish exactly what part Fallaci herself, her editors and her translators played in adapting her volumes for a different audience.⁹⁹

Whatever the balance between author's, translator's and editor's responsibility, however, it is evident that the English translations distance themselves from the source text in two essential areas. At a macro-textual level they reveal large cuts, strategic re-locations

⁹⁸ G. Rosa, 'Il nome di Oriana', p. 59, M. Barengi, 'Oriana e Omero', p. 66, and C. Marabini, 'Panagulis, amore mio', respectively.

⁹⁹ The English version of *Insciallah*, for instance, is presented as a 'translation by Oriana Fallaci from a translation by James Marcus', suggesting a high degree of authorial control; see O. Fallaci, *Inshallah* (New York: Doubleday, and London: Chatto & Windus, 1992). In *The Italian Book in America/Il libro italiano in America*, ed. by O. Munafò, Nan A. Talese, one of Fallaci's American editors, gives a brief account of the difficulties involved in producing the English-language version of *Un uomo*, describing Fallaci's reluctance to allow the process of translation to take place, and her direct involvement in the choice of William Weaver as the most suitable person for the job (pp. 72-74).

of key sections, and at times even the insertion of entirely new passages. Pamela Swinglehurst's translations of *Gli antipatici*, which appeared in the UK as *Limelighters* (London: Michael Joseph, 1967) and in the USA as *The Egotists: Sixteen Surprising Interviews* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1968) does not include most of the interviews with Italians published in the source text. A similar strategy is used in the translation of *Intervista con la storia*,¹⁰⁰ while in the English-language version of *Se il sole muore*¹⁰¹ informative passages on the background of the individual astronauts or on USA geographical locations are deleted, as are two entire chapters (one on the monstrosities of the New York Trade Fair and the other on an 'all-American' mother's day) which were probably deemed too sarcastic to be presented to an American audience.¹⁰² The conscious choice to adapt the text for a specific new audience is especially evident in the translation of *Niente e così sia*, which appeared in the UK as *Nothing and Amen* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972) and in the USA as *Nothing and So be It* (New York: Doubleday, 1972).¹⁰³ The Italian volume opens with six pages of direct (though translated) quotations from the testimonies of American soldiers who had taken part in the My Lai massacre, followed by Fallaci's claim to be writing '[un] libro che spiega My Lai. Perché quasi niente quanto la guerra, e niente quanto una guerra ingiusta, frantuma la dignità dell'uomo'.¹⁰⁴ The English version does not avoid the issue of the massacre, but moves the passages in question to Chapter 7, strategically positioning them at the centre of the book, where they can function as a signal of Fallaci's rejection of her initial fascination with war as a *locus* of heroism. Reduced in length, and embedded in the narrative development of the book, the My Lai

¹⁰⁰ O. Fallaci, *Interview with History*, trans. by John Shepley (London: Michael Joseph, 1976).

¹⁰¹ O. Fallaci, *If the Sun Dies*, trans. by P. Swinglehurst (London: Collins, and New York: Atheneum, 1967).

¹⁰² See Gatt-Rutter, p. 119 for a similar opinion.

¹⁰³ The two volumes are identical in all details except the title; the translation is by Isabel Quigly.

¹⁰⁴ *Niente e così sia*, pp. i-ix (p. ix).

episode maintains its significance but does not constitute, for a US reader, a potentially insurmountable barrier of hostility at the very beginning of the book.¹⁰⁵

The quantity and significance of such macro-textual changes suggest that Fallaci was directly involved in the rewriting process. And the fact that they become particularly noticeable in volumes written when Fallaci had already started to re-fashion herself as a putative American, had achieved international success, and was consciously writing for a multi-national, popular audience suggests that she might even have had a large part in deciding what changes would be needed in the first place. On the other hand (and with the possible exception of *Insciallah*),¹⁰⁶ micro-textual features may be more directly attributed to the choice of a fluent strategy on the part of Fallaci's translators. Discussing *Lettera a un bambino mai nato*, John Gatt-Rutter has noted that 'the prosodic features of the "mother's" Italian are largely lost in the English translation, which is obviously unhappy with the "un-English" emphasis of the original (excessive even to the Italian literary ear)'; and he has pointed out the widespread application of this type of translation strategy when remarking that in the case of *Se il sole muore*, 'as always, the English translation systematically excises the excited, incantatory, iterative, rhetoric of the speaking voice'.¹⁰⁷

It is precisely on the stylistic features which most irritate Italian critics that the English translations of Fallaci's works noticeably intervene, cutting out excessive repetition and redundant qualifiers, simplifying syntax, and getting rid of many of the apostrophes interrupting the narration. Thus the reader of the English version of *Se il sole muore*, is

¹⁰⁵ *Nothing and Amen*, pp. 188-91. On the effect of this dislocation on the narrative structure of the volume see Gatt-Rutter, *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 126.

¹⁰⁶ *Insciallah* and its English translation, *Inshallah*, are a peculiar case both for the re-appropriation of the translation by the author, and for the extensive use of Italian dialect in the source text. As John Gatt-Rutter has noted, a whole dimension of the text is omitted in the translation, which renders all dialect as standard language (*Oriana Fallaci*, p. 151).

¹⁰⁷ *Oriana Fallaci*, p. 75 and p. 112.

spared approximately two thirds of the exasperating count-down before the launch of a rocket (“Attenzione! Meno quaranta minuti...” “Attenzione! Meno trenta minuti...” ...).¹⁰⁸

The emphatic pathos of a sentence like ‘Sono soli, soli, soli e infilare quell’ago da soli è mille volte più arduo’ (p. 62) is scaled down to ‘They are on their own, and to thread this needle on their own is a thousand times more difficult’ (p. 51). The redundant rhetorical build up in ‘Non hanno più voglia di mangiare, di bere, di dormire, di sognare’ (p. 63) is reduced to the matter-of-fact ‘They no longer have any desire to eat or drink’ (p. 52). And a whole host of remarks directed to the narrator’s father/addressee, such as the already mentioned ‘ed ora stai attento, papà: il film non è facile’ (p. 55) are simply excised.

Thanks to the macro- and micro-textual strategies adopted in the translations of Fallaci’s works, then, her English and American readers (including professional ones) do not have to face a text which could be construed as hostile to their culture and nation (since passages which might have been too offensive have been cut, rewritten, or strategically repositioned), nor one which disrupts the rules of stylistic decorum (because excessive rhetoric and cheap effects have been eliminated in the translation process). As a result, both Fallaci’s persona and her prose are rendered more ‘tame’ and palatable in translation.

(v) Conflicting models

Fallaci’s conscious mixture of literature, journalism, reportage and autobiography, as well as her construction and exploitation of a gender- and culture-crossing persona allowed her to produce her own specific brand of travel writing, while also influencing her reception both at home and abroad. The ‘hybridity’ of Fallaci’s texts partly explains her popular

¹⁰⁸ *Se il sole muore*, pp. 437-8; *If the Sun Dies*, pp. 356-7.

appeal in Italy, but her works seem to fall outside the categories (and hence the attentions) of literary criticism, and end up being relegated to a non-literary limbo, treated as journalism that got out of place, or that most mystifying of objects, the popular best-seller. However, that same hybridity, which is a fundamental trait of travel writing, can help to explain Fallaci's greater critical fortune in Anglo-Saxon countries, where critics found it less difficult to come to terms with Fallaci's brand of prose, since they were more used to the heterogeneous nature of her chosen genres, and more familiar with the doubts raised by New Journalism (and, later, by critical theory) about the possibility, or indeed the benefit, of a clear distinction between literature and 'non-literature'.

Fallaci, together with her American and British publishers, exploited the affinities between her work and well known writers and 'schools', both by publicly claiming authors such as London, Hemingway and Mailer as her sources of inspiration, and by undertaking substantial 'adaptations' of her volumes, which were rewritten to suit the needs of the Anglo-American market. Her persona, on the other hand, was constructed (and in some cases manipulated) on the basis of a conscious mixture of 'American-style' modernity and 'Italian' or 'European' stereotypical traits. As a result, while in Italy it is predominantly her 'protagonismo all'americana' which gets noticed (and frowned upon),¹⁰⁹ elsewhere the figure of the 'little Italian woman' who stood up to the 'great men' and the great events of her time provides Fallaci with a much more palatable image, at once a model to follow and a suitably distanced figure, whose excesses can be put down to her origins in a notoriously 'hot-blooded' country.

Furthermore, Fallaci's English language translators, in their effort to render her texts fluently, ended up simplifying her prose, and smoothing out many of the traits which, over

¹⁰⁹ A. Santini, 'Così Oriana si innamorò del suo grande eroe greco', p. 41.

the years, have raised the eyebrows of Italian critics: the stentoreous rhetoric of her voice, her love of repetition, her sometimes obsessive use of apostrophe are some of the elements often 'lost in translation'. The result is a much lighter brand of prose which, while still striving to involve the reader in the experiences narrated in the text, does not sound as stridently patronizing as its Italian counterpart.

Oriana Fallaci could then be seen as the typical case of an author whose work is somehow 'set free' and given a new lease of life in translation. Yet, it is precisely when we look at Fallaci's books in English translation that we realize that her disruptions and her genre (and gender) crossings are not so radical. She was certainly not the first to use the hybrid mixture of genres which has become the hallmark of her work, and her popularity in America, in particular, takes on the traits of a self-fulfilling prophecy: having 'adopted' the USA as her spiritual home, Fallaci proceeded to fashion herself as an 'American writer' — with the help of her publishers and translators. Even the ambiguities of her persona with respect to gender become much less radical once we read her books as non-fiction writing, and, more specifically, as travel writing. Travel offered Fallaci a way out of traditional female stereotypes and narrative models, but it also invited the identification between her narrative persona and her real self, creating the need to keep up the image of Fallaci as a larger-than-life and at least partly outrageous 'superwoman'.

There is a further development in this story: having found her way out of journalism and into a 'double barrel' genre was not enough for Fallaci. She was not satisfied with the travel-book. In true Italian fashion, and despite her claims about the irrelevance of the distinction between literature and non-literature, fiction and 'faction', she aspired to write 'a great book', and a great book had to be something different from reportage: early on she

tried semi-autobiographical fiction with *Penelope alla guerra* and *Lettera a un bambino mai nato*; then she moved to biography with *Un uomo*; and, finally, with *Insciallah* she tried to write a historical novel of gigantic and tragic proportions, loosely based on the events of the war in Lebanon.

Paradoxically, however, the more she moved towards canonical fiction, the more she attempted to produce 'a great work of literature', the more her strengths were diluted and replaced by an overwhelmingly rhetorical voice. Antonio Gramsci remarked that every time an Italian tries to write public prose (rather than the private prose of letters or diaries) the rhetoric tends to become unbearable, and threatens to engulf everything else.¹¹⁰ The image seems to fit Fallaci to perfection, and confirms the inherent contradictions in her career: for all her international credentials, her world-wide travel, her rebellious breaking of boundaries, and her self-fashioned 'Americanità', Fallaci's logic as a writer remains thoroughly anchored to the standards and expectations of the Italian tradition.

¹¹⁰ Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966): 'Nelle memorie e in generale in tutti gli scritti dedicati a poco pubblico e a se stesso predomina la sobrietà, la semplicità, la immediatezza, mentre negli altri scritti predomina la trionfanza, lo stile oratorio, l'ipocrisia stilistica. Questa "malattia" è talmente diffusa che si è attaccata al popolo, per il quale scrivere significa montare sui trampoli, mettersi a festa, "fingere" uno stile ridondante, in ogni caso esprimersi in modo diverso dal comune' (p. 61).

6. WITNESSES AND LIARS: ITALO CALVINO AND THE QUESTION OF LITERARINESS.

(i) The Making of An Icon

Since its publication in 1972 Italo Calvino's *Le città invisibili* has achieved vast international popularity and can be said to have become part of a collective patrimony of imagery and citations. Yet while in Italy the book is mostly mentioned and discussed in the context of Calvino's *oeuvre* and of his influence as a cultural as well as literary mentor, in the Anglo-American context *Invisible Cities*¹ seems to have gained a degree of autonomy from the figure of its author and established itself as an icon of contemporary, (post)modern life.² Nearly three decades after its appearance, Calvino's volume is regularly mentioned in book reviews and singled out by writers as a model for their work;³ it provides inspiration for those attempting to describe the

¹ Trans. by William Weaver (London: Secker & Warburg, 1974).

² On the role of Calvino in the panorama of contemporary Italian literature and culture see Carla Benedetti, *Pasolini contro Calvino: Per una letteratura impura* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1998); Benedetti's volume caused a lively debate, illustrated in Angelo Guglielmi, 'Ma Calvino ha vinto la sfida del '900', *Corriere della Sera*, 22 January 1998, p. 33; on the controversy see also Robert S. C. Gordon, 'Pasolini contro Calvino: Culture, the Canon and the Millennium', *Modern Italy*, 3.1 (1998), 87-99. On Calvino's influence on subsequent generations of Italian writers see Filippo La Porta, *La nuova narrativa italiana*, according to whom Calvino 'sarà uno dei pochi "maestri" italiani riconosciuti dagli scrittori di questo periodo' (pp. 11-12). On the decontextualized reception of Calvino's work in the USA and the UK, and his association with postmodernism see Rebecca West, 'L'identità americana di Calvino', trans. by Giuseppe Sertoli, *Nuova Corrente*, special issue *Italo Calvino/2*, ed. by Mario Boselli, 34.100 (July-December 1987), pp. 363-74.

³ Recently, *Invisible Cities* has been mentioned in connection with books such as Ken Kalfus's *Thirst* (Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 1998; see Ron Carlson, 'Invisible Malls, Imaginary Baseball', *The New York Times*, 26 July 1998, p. 9), Peter Esterhazy *She Loves Me*, trans. by Judith Sollosy (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1997; see Thomas McGonigle, 'The Heart of the Matter', *Los Angeles Times*, 7 June 1998, p. 10), Jim Crace's *Quarantine* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1997; see Mark Shechner, 'New Versions of Christ's Temptation in the Wilderness Gives Satan the Best Role', *Buffalo News*, 10 May 1998, p. 6) and Andrew Crumey's *Pfitz* (New York: Picador USA, 1997; see Alyssa Katz, 'Invisible Cities', *Newsday*, 14 December 1997, p. 14; and

modern metropolis as well as the splendours of Renaissance Venice;⁴ and it features as the subject of high-tech research projects and avant-garde art exhibitions.⁵ Calvino's rendition of Marco Polo's figure and of his travels seems at times even to have replaced its historical counterpart in the popular imagination, and the final proof of the fact that *Invisible Cities* has become an integral part of contemporary popular culture is perhaps in the fact that references to the book appear in works such as Neil Gaiman's cult comic *The Sandman*, where Marco Polo is evoked in terms which are at least as remindful of Calvino as of *Il Milione*.⁶

The popularity of Calvino's text (and of his representation of Polo) is particularly evident in contemporary travel writing criticism, where *Invisible Cities* is

Andrew Miller, 'Castles in the Air', *The New York Times*, 19 October 1997, p. 40). Kalfus directly alludes to Calvino in the short story 'Invisible Malls' when he speaks of 'tales of invisible cities ... calvinoed metropolises built from memory and desire' (quoted in Carlson, 'Invisible Malls, Imaginary Baseball'); while Jim Crace has singled out *Invisible Cities* as the book he would like to have written himself, explaining that it is 'a book that seems to take as much pleasure and as many liberties with maps as I should like to myself' (J. Crace, 'Books: I Wish I'd Written...', *The Guardian*, 19 June 1997, p. 17).

⁴ See for instance Richard D. Lehan, *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), and the review of this book by Tom Vanderbilt, 'Dreamscapes', *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July 1998, p. 8; Jamie S. Scott and Paul Simpson Housley, 'Eden, Babylon, New Jerusalem: A Taxonomy for Writing the City', in *Writing the City: Eden, Babylon and the New Jerusalem*, ed. by Peter Preston and Paul Simpson-Housley (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 331-341; and Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992).

⁵ Entries for the 1997 Graphisoft Prize Student CAD Competition (sponsored, among others, by the American Institute of Architecture Students) included 'architectural works drawing from a list of literary or cultural references ranging from Bartok's "Blubeard Castle" and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* to Douglas Adams's *Restaurant at the End of the Universe* and "The House of the Rising Sun" by the Animals' ('Richard Meier, FAIA to Chair Graphisoft Prize Jury', *Business Wire*, 11 March 1997, no page). In the 1997 'Artists in the Marketplace' exhibition the Bronx Museum displayed a work by Seong Chun described in *The New York Times* as an 'airy suspended sculpture made of crocheted strips of paper, each bearing words from Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*' (Holland Cotter, 'A Flock of Fledglings, Testing their Wings', *The New York Times*, 1 August 1997, p. 26).

⁶ Neil Gaiman, 'Soft Places', in *The Sandman: Fables & Reflections* (London: Titan Books, 1994), pp. 124-48. In Gaiman's story Marco Polo's remark 'I have seen such cities...' elicits from Rustichello the following comments, clearly inspired by Calvino's work: 'Yes! That was your genius! Being able to describe cities. Not just the land, or the trade, but the soul of the city. What made it uniquely itself... Kubilai Khan [sic] stayed in his summer palace in summer, and his winter palace in winter, like a spider, edging from one side of the web to another. And you went out to all the cities in his empire and came home and described them to him' (p. 137, emphasis in the original). For Polo's (rather than Calvino's) travels see Marco Polo, *Il Milione/Le divisament dou monde*, ed. by Gabriella Ronchi (Milan: Mondadori, 1982); for the English version see *Marco Polo: The Description of the World*, ed. and trans. by A. C. Moule and Paul Pelliot (London: Routledge, 1938).

one of the most frequently quoted texts and is often presented as a model for the genre, as well as an exemplary exploration of the theoretical issues evoked by the activity of travel and by its representation.⁷

Yet Calvino's book is in many senses an anomalous model for the genre of travel writing. It is an openly fictional representation of imaginary travels to places of fantasy. It is set in stylized, often abstract language and depends on a complex formal structure which has little in common with the traditional realism and linear narrative of the travelogue. Its main narrator/protagonist, Marco Polo, is explicitly 'denounced' not only as distinct from the author of the book (thus denying the narrative the autobiographical character and authority associated with most travel writing), but also as an entirely imaginary re-incarnation of a historical (but already highly fictionalized and 'mythologized') figure. Other voices are present in the text (that of a similarly 'mythical' Kublai Khan, and the impersonal, disembodied one which introduces the dialogues between Marco and the Khan), rendering the exclusive identification between reader and traveller/narrator virtually impossible. And there is no trace in the

⁷ Calvino's book is evoked by Dennis Porter, who describes Barthes's *L'Empire des signes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970) as a text which 'does not claim to be about a country on the map, but a possible country — what, after Italo Calvino, might be called an "invisible country"' (*Haunted Journeys*, p. 301). *Invisible Cities* also provides an epigraph ('Desires are already memories') to Ali Behdad's discussion of the desire for the Orient in 'belated' writers such as Nerval (*Belated Travellers*, p. 18). Mary B. Campbell discusses 'Calvino's maxim — "it is not the voice that commands the story: it is the ear"' in the epilogue to *The Witness and the Other World*, significantly entitled 'A Brief History of the Future' (p. 256). Manfred Pfister quotes Calvino's Marco when discussing the connection between stereotypes and cultural identity (*The Fatal Gift of Beauty*, p. 4). Calvino's version of the figure of Marco Polo and of his narrative are analysed by Rana Kabbani, who treats them as a perfect example of the problems of representation implicit in travel writing (*Imperial Fictions*, pp. 113-14). And a similar line is taken by Syed Manzurul Islam, who describes *Invisible Cities* as 'Italo Calvino's gem of a text [...] which, using the figures of Marco Polo and Kubilai Khan, re-enacts much of the contemporary discussion on the relation between language, narrative and representation' (*The Ethics of Travel*, p. 120). The list of references could in fact be longer. Mentions of *Invisible Cities* are a regular feature of conferences devoted to travel and travel writing, and the popularity of Calvino's book does not seem to be diminishing: the forthcoming Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press), will again feature it as one of the outstanding examples of contemporary travel writing.

book of the customary narrative closure provided by the end of the journey and the return 'home' — or at least by prominent references to its possibility and desirability.

In fact Calvino was far from thinking of *Le città invisibili* as a travel book. In *Lezioni americane* he described this text as his most complex and pointed out its highly symbolic and intellectual nature:

Un simbolo [...] che mi ha dato le maggiori possibilità di esprimere la tensione tra razionalità geometrica e groviglio delle esistenze umane è quello della città. Il mio libro in cui credo d'aver detto più cose resta *Le città invisibili*, perché ho potuto concentrare su un unico simbolo tutte le mie riflessioni, le mie esperienze, le mie congetture; e perché ho costruito una struttura sfaccettata in cui ogni breve testo sta vicino agli altri in una successione che non implica una consequenzialità o una gerarchia ma una rete entro la quale si possono tracciare molteplici percorsi e ricavare conclusioni plurime e ramificate.⁸

The issue of symbolic and formal transfiguration of reality is essential to Calvino's reflections on literature and to his refusal of realism as a mode of apprehension and knowledge of the world.⁹ It is still with a specific reference to *Le città invisibili* that Calvino wrote:

⁸ *Lezioni americane: Sei proposte per il prossimo millennio* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993; 1st edn Milan: Garzanti, 1988), p. 80.

⁹ According to Vittorio Spinazzola, for instance, Calvino's idea of literature 'appare sorretta dalla tensione di due spinte concorrenti': on the one hand 'una rivendicazione del primato della fantasia creatrice', and on the other 'il bisogno di controllarlo, disciplinandone l'esuberanza'; V. Spinazzola, 'L'io diviso di Italo Calvino', in *L'offerta letteraria*, pp. 43-74 (p. 43). In an interview with Ferdinando Camon published in *Il mestiere di scrittore* (Milan: Garzanti, 1973; pp. 181-201) Calvino asserted: 'credo che i rapporti tra mondo scritto e mondo della pratica devono fare un lungo giro, provare la loro capacità di cristallizzare materiali diversi che i giorni gli depositano addosso, ed è così che non solo i filosofi ma anche i poeti cambiano il mondo. Altri tipi di rapporto più diretto non ne conosco, o almeno non ci credo' (p. 198). Calvino further clarified his position on the issue of the relationship between reality and literature in a paper read at the conference *Livelli della realtà* (Florence, 9-13 September 1978) and later published as 'I livelli della realtà in letteratura', in I. Calvino, *Una pietra sopra* (Milan: Mondadori, 1995; 1st edn Turin: Einaudi, 1980), pp. 374-90; addressing an ideal reader, Calvino states: "tu che leggi sei tenuto a creder una cosa sola: che ciò che stai leggendo è qualcosa che in un momento precedente qualcuno ha scritto; quello che leggi avviene in un particolare universo che è quello della parola scritta. Può darsi che tra l'universo della parola scritta e altri universi dell'esperienza si stabiliscano delle corrispondenze di vario genere e che tu sia chiamato a intervenire col tuo giudizio su queste corrispondenze, ma il tuo giudizio sarebbe in ogni caso sbagliato se leggendo

la mia ricerca dell'esattezza si biforcava in due direzioni. Da una parte la riduzione degli avvenimenti contingenti a schemi astratti con cui si possano compiere operazioni e dimostrare teoremi; e dall'altra parte lo sforzo delle parole per render conto con la maggiore precisione possibile dell'aspetto sensibile delle cose.¹⁰

Yet even the most sensual elements of experience have to be transfigured by imagination in order to become literature:

Diciamo che diversi elementi concorrono a formare la parte visuale dell'immaginazione letteraria: l'osservazione diretta del mondo reale, la trasfigurazione fantasmatica e onirica, il mondo figurativo trasmesso dalla cultura ai suoi vari livelli, e un processo d'astrazione, condensazione, e interiorizzazione dell'esperienza sensibile, d'importanza decisiva tanto nella visualizzazione quanto nella verbalizzazione del pensiero. (p. 106)

The distinction between reality and imagination is resolved only in the necessary fiction of the written text, since 'tutte le "realità" e tutte le "fantasie" possono prendere forma solo attraverso la scrittura, nella quale esteriorità e interiorità, mondo e io, esperienza e fantasia appaiono composte della stessa materia verbale' (p. 110).

The emblem of this kind of literary writing is for Calvino the crystal, 'con la sua esatta sfaccettatura e la sua capacità di rifrangere la luce' (p. 79), and a literary work is 'una di queste minime porzioni in cui l'esistente si cristallizza in una forma, acquista un senso' (p. 78). The technique through which Calvino achieves the crystal-like quality of literature is 'il più delle volte una sottrazione di peso' (p. 7), that 'salto improvviso del poeta-filosofo che si solleva sulla pesantezza del mondo' which he

tu credessi d'entrare in rapporto diretto con l'esperienza d'altri universi che non siano quello della parola scritta" (pp. 376-77).

¹⁰ *Lezioni americane*, p. 82.

proposed in *Lezioni americane* as ‘simbolo augurale per l'affacciarsi al nuovo millennio’ (p. 16).

It is a similar process of exclusion and of transfiguration which Calvino described as essential in the perception and description of a city:

Per vedere una città non basta tenere gli occhi aperti. Occorre per prima cosa scartare tutto ciò che impedisce di vederla, tutte le idee ricevute, le immagini precostituite che continuano a ingombrare il campo visivo e la capacità di comprendere. Poi occorre saper semplificare, ridurre all'essenziale l'enorme numero d'elementi che a ogni secondo la città mette sotto gli occhi di chi la guarda, e collegare i frammenti sparsi in un disegno analitico e insieme unitario, come il diagramma di una macchina, dal quale si possa capire come funziona.¹¹

Without the intervention of such literary processes, travel appears to Calvino as a practice of little consequence — yet one which can easily activate the visual apprehension of the world. In one of the travel correspondences which appeared in the *Corriere della Sera* in the series ‘Il taccuino del signor Palomar’, Calvino wrote: ‘Viaggiare non serve molto a capire [...] ma serve a riattivare per un momento l'uso degli occhi, la lettura visiva del mondo.’¹² The key for this possible function of travel as a stimulus for a new (or renewed) understanding of the world is in the presence of difference. Thus in the same reportage from Japan which contains the last sentence quoted, Calvino/Palomar observes:

¹¹ ‘Gli dèi della città’, *Una pietra sopra*, pp. 340-44 (p. 340). The essay first appeared in *Nuova società*, 67 (November 1975), only three years after the publication of *Le città invisibili*. Marco Belpoliti notes that the processes pointed out by Calvino, “scartare”, “semplificare”, “collegare”, are the ones through which ‘la conoscenza del mondo, che si dà in modo fenomenologico solo attraverso i particolari, viene restituita a una unità mediante l'immaginazione e il pensiero’; M. Belpoliti, *L'occhio di Calvino* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), pp. 195-96.

¹² ‘La vecchia signora in kimono viola’, *Collezione di sabbia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994; 1st edn Milan: Grazzanti, 1984), pp. 167-74 (p. 168); this reportage from Japan had first appeared as ‘Due donne, due volti del Giappone: Italo Calvino racconta un viaggio del signor Palomar da Tokyo a Kyoto’, *Corriere della Sera*, 5 December 1976, p. 3.

Nuovo nel paese, sono ancora nella fase in cui tutto quello che vedo ha un valore proprio perché non so quale valore dargli. [...] Quando tutto avrà trovato un ordine e un posto nella mia mente, comincerò a non trovare più nulla degno di nota, a *non vedere* più quello che vedo. Perché vedere vuol dire percepire delle differenze, e appena le differenze si uniformano nel prevedibile quotidiano lo sguardo scorre su una superficie liscia e senza appigli. (p. 168)

If difference can stimulate the visual apprehension of reality, only the effort of interpretation, the translation operated by literary transfiguration can, according to Calvino, establish significant links among phenomena, traces, signs, and attempt to produce an understanding of the world — even though this implies a necessary element of mystification. It is in another of Palomar's reportages (this time from Mexico) that Calvino makes the explicit connection between interpretation, translation and their inevitable re-writing of reality:

Una pietra, una figura, un segno, una parola che ci arrivano isolati dal loro contesto sono solo quella pietra, quella figura, quel segno o parola: possiamo tentare di definirli, di descriverli in quanto tali, e basta; se oltre la faccia che presentano a noi essi anche hanno una faccia nascosta, a noi non è dato di saperlo. Il rifiuto di comprendere più di quello che queste pietre ci mostrano è forse il solo modo possibile per dimostrare rispetto del loro segreto; tentare d'indovinare è presunzione, tradimento di quel vero significato perduto.

[...] Il signor Palomar pensa che ogni traduzione richiede un'altra traduzione e così via. Si domanda: "Cosa voleva dire morte, vita, continuità, passaggio, per gli antichi Toltechi? E cosa può voler dire per questi ragazzi? E per me?" Eppure sa che non potrebbe mai soffocare in sé il bisogno di tradurre, di passare da un linguaggio all'altro, da figure concrete a parole astratte, da simboli astratti a esperienze concrete, di tessere e ritessere una rete d'analogie. Non interpretare è impossibile, come è impossibile trattenersi dal pensare.¹³

¹³ 'Serpenti e teschi', *Palomar* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994; 1st edn Turin: Einaudi, 1983), pp. 97-100 (pp. 99-100); the article first appeared as 'Gli dei indios che parlano della pietra', *Corriere della Sera*, 16 July 1976, p. 3. Similar comments on the mystifying nature of intercultural communication are also to be found in 'Montezuma', in I. Calvino, *Prima che tu dica "Pronto"* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993), pp. 170-80.

Given the close relationship between these reflections on travel and the issues of narrative and representation which were central to his work, it may come as a surprise that Calvino, who regularly wrote travel pieces as part of his life-long collaboration with newspapers and journals,¹⁴ never published a travel book.

As a matter of fact, Calvino did write a travelogue, but made a last minute decision to withdraw it from publication. The book, which was to be called *Un ottimista in America*, was based on a six-month trip to the USA which Calvino undertook in 1959-1960 with the benefit of a bursary from the Ford Foundation.¹⁵ That same trip is the object of *Diario americano 1959-60*, a series of open letters addressed by Calvino to friends and colleagues at Einaudi, which were published posthumously in 1994 in the volume *Eremita a Parigi* (pp. 20-124). If we are to believe Cesare Cases, a few pages of the withdrawn book (or at least of its first draft) were published in journals, but all other traces of it were destroyed by Calvino:

Verso il 1960, dopo un viaggio negli Stati Uniti seguito a un altro nell'Unione Sovietica — caso allora assai raro, non essendo ancora cominciata la grande ridda degli scrittori giramondo — [Calvino] scrisse un libro sull'esperienza americana in cui tra l'altro metteva a confronto le due civiltà, insistendo (mi disse qualcuno che l'aveva letto e apprezzato) sull'importanza della geografia e rispettivamente della storia nella loro formazione. O che questa chiave gli sembrasse troppo frivola, o che qualche specialista gli avesse sconsigliato la pubblicazione, fatto sta che il libro — di cui mi pare che fosse già apparsa qualche anticipazione in una rivista — fu ritirato quando era già in bozze, e l'inesorabile Calvino fece distruggere i flani perché nessuno potesse ristamparlo. Quella volta ci mise davvero una pietra sopra. Non so se avesse ragione o torto, so che nessun altro l'avrebbe fatto. Poi andò, chissà, forse in Tanzania o in Indonesia: gli scrittori

¹⁴ The most complete bibliography and discussion of Calvino's journalistic production is Gian Carlo Ferretti, *Le capre di Bikini: Calvino giornalista e saggista. 1945-1985* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1989).

¹⁵ See Esther Calvino, 'Nota introduttiva', in I. Calvino, *Eremita a Parigi: Pagine autobiografiche* (Milan: Mondadori, 1994), pp. 1-3; and Martin McLaughlin, *Italo Calvino* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 60.

come i professori non si possono più seguire nei loro spostamenti. Ma ch'io sappia non tentò mai di persuaderci che aveva capito la Tanzania in due giorni.¹⁶

Cases's sarcastic comments on the excessive ease with which contemporary writers produce travel books, and on the generally low quality of their efforts, bears many marks of the traditional attitude of Italian criticism to the genre of travel writing, of its association with journalism and of Croce's remark that 'pei scrittori in ozio è sempre pronto il libro di viaggio'.¹⁷ The underlying assumption, in Cases's remarks, is that Calvino's travel book could only have been an amateurish effort in a field which was not, strictly speaking, within the boundaries of literature. And it is precisely the great importance attributed by Calvino to the literary quality and status of his work which explains the withdrawal of his American travel book.¹⁸ In a letter written in January 1985 Calvino gives the following explanation for his decision:

Avevo deciso di non pubblicare il libro perché rileggendolo in bozze l'avevo sentito troppo modesto come opera letteraria e non abbastanza originale come reportage giornalistico. Ho fatto bene? Mah! Pubblicato allora, il libro sarebbe stato comunque un documento dell'epoca, e di una fase del mio itinerario.¹⁹

¹⁶ See C. Cases, 'Ricordo di Calvino', in *Patrie lettere* (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), pp. 172-75 (p. 174). Among Calvino's publications of that period, the one which most resembles the description given by Cases is 'Diario americano 1960' (*Nuovi argomenti*, 53-54 (November 1961-February 1962), 164-88); the 'diary' is in fact divided in short paragraphs the first of which is devoted to 'La storia e la geografia', and various comparisons are drawn between the USA and the USSR. Other pieces written by Calvino on his American travels appeared in *ABC*, *L'Europa letteraria*, *L'Illustrazione italiana*, and *Tempo presente* between June 1960 and June 1961. All are now collected as *Corrispondenze dagli Stati Uniti (1960-1961)* in Italo Calvino, *Saggi. 1945-1985*, ed. by Mario Barenghi, 2 vols., I Meridiani (Milan: Mondadori, 1995), II, pp. 2499-2651.

¹⁷ B. Croce, 'Edmondo de Amicis', p. 165.

¹⁸ In a recent article, Lucia Re has underlined the essential role assigned by Calvino to the notion of literature throughout his career. Re also traces a connection between the genesis and evolution of Calvino's conception of literature and the influence of Croce in Italian culture ('Calvino and the Value of Literature', *MLN*, 113.1 (January 1998), 121-37 (p. 125-26)). Francesca Serra, on the other hand, has pointed out that Calvino did not have a very high opinion of travel writing as a literary enterprise (*Calvino e il pulviscolo di Palomar* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1996), p. 90).

¹⁹ Letter to Luca Baranelli, quoted in E. Calvino, 'Nota introduttiva', p. 2. Esther Calvino adds that she decided to publish the text of *Diario americano 1959-60* because 'come documento autobiografico — e non come prova letteraria — mi sembra essenziale; come autoritratto il più spontaneo e diretto' (p. 3).

Calvino's justifications, just like Cases's comments, are couched in the language of that critical tradition which has made Italian travel writing a largely invisible and disguised genre, maintaining its lack of literariness and its preferential affiliation to journalistic reportage, and assigning to it, at most, a documentary value. Thus the question of 'literariness' (as a quality of the text and as a set of generic expectations which could influence its reception) doubly explains Calvino's decision to withdraw his American travelogue from publication. The socio-historical portraits and commentaries of 'Diario americano 1959-60', and, in all probability, *Un ottimista in America* had no place in the highly literary project Calvino was developing through the 1960s and 1970s.²⁰

When travel appeared again in Calvino's work, it was in the form of the stylized, fragmented and anti-realist journalistic reportages and reflections of 'Il taccuino del signor Palomar', as well as in the just as stylized, crystalline construction of *Le città invisibili* (and, at least in part, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*), where he attempted to sublimate the experience of the world in an essentially literary project.²¹ At that point, travel did offer Calvino a useful stylistic and conceptual model. On the one hand it provided that 'pathos della distanza' which Giorgio Patrizi has described as a 'figura di controllo del molteplice, del diverso, una chiave per la

²⁰ Tracing the evolution of the notion of literature in Calvino's thought Re speaks of 'a new, more contemplative phase in his writing, culminating in the 1972 visionary masterpiece *Invisible Cities*' (p. 126). Carla Benedetti goes as far as condemning 'l'ultimo Calvino' for privileging a notion of literariness above all else and choosing 'la rinuncia al Mondo, quello "vero" e terribile, a vantaggio di un mondo di convenzione; [...] ridando però nel contempo una sorta di aura postuma al gioco della letteratura, raggelato nella sua esanime sopravvivenza istituzionale' (*Pasolini contro Calvino*, p. 135.).

²¹ On the connections between Calvino's journalistic 'essays' and his narrative of the same period see Ferretti, *Le capre di Bikini*, and Tani, *Il romanzo di ritorno*, pp. 110-14 and 125.

messa in ordine dei dati più disomogenei dell'esistenza'.²² On the other, travel writing constituted for Calvino an antidote to the Italian tradition of prose and essay writing represented by the 'prosa d'arte' and by writers such as Emilio Cecchi (himself author of various travel books). It was through the 'idea di prosa che deriva dalle carte dei cronisti e dei viaggiatori, dalle epistole, dalle ambascerie, dagli *exempla* dei predicatori e da "ogni altro esempio di scrittura pratica"' that Calvino, according to Belpoliti, was able to reconcile his admiration for Cecchi and his interest in the 'problema dello *stile*' with a different, more 'sober', Italian tradition of prose writing, marked by the figures of Galileo and Leopardi.²³ Thus travel (and travel writing) could constitute a privileged terrain for Calvino's formal and intellectual quest — as long as they were translated into the crystalline language of literature.²⁴

²² G. Patrizi, 'Il significato del grigio', *Nuova Corrente*, special issue *Italo Calvino/2*, 297-327 (p. 299); the Nietzschean expression 'pathos della distanza' was used by Cases with reference to Calvino in 'Calvino e il "pathos della distanza"', *Patrie lettere*, pp. 160-166.

²³ M. Belpoliti, *L'occhio di Calvino*, pp. 181-83. The label 'prosa d'arte' points to the line of development which goes from the Florentine journal 'La Voce', to 'La Ronda', founded in Rome in 1919 by writers such as Cardarelli, Cecchi, Baldini and Bacchelli. 'Rondismo' became associated with the claim of absolute autonomy of art from social and political life, and with the return to the tradition of high culture represented by the great classics. The search for stylistic and formal refinement produced the so called 'prosa d'arte', of which Cecchi, Cardarelli and Bacchelli were possibly the best representatives. On 'La Voce', 'La Ronda' and the movements associated with them see L. Russo, *La critica letteraria contemporanea*, especially pp. 430-57 and pp. 602-56. On Calvino's admiration for Cecchi see I. Calvino, 'Cecchi e i pesci drago', *La repubblica*, 14 July 1984, pp. 16-17. On the line Galileo-Leopardi see Guido Almansi, 'Intervista a Italo Calvino', *Nuova corrente*, special issue *Calvino/2*, 387-408 (pp. 395-98).

²⁴ On the importance of prose writing (and in particular of the essay form) for Calvino, and on its connection with the 'pathos della distanza' on the one hand and with the concept of literature on the other, Patrizi writes: 'Il saggio è per Calvino un tipo di scrittura che va definendosi secondo questi modi della parzialità e della distanza: che tali modi di approccio al mondo passino dal romanzo al saggio, improntando i testi dell'uno e dell'altro di formule stilistiche fondamentalmente identiche, indica una continuità e circolarità di scrittura che approda alla coscienza del carattere autoriflessivo del testo letterario, coscienza che è andata divenendo, con gli anni e con le opere, via via più lucida, convinta, geometricamente assertiva' ('Il significato del grigio', p. 300). This developing connection also explains why the style and content of *Le città invisibili* have many more points of contact with the essays and reportages which followed the book, rather than with those which preceded it (see below, section iv for a discussion of some specific examples). Notwithstanding the unmistakable taste for the ironic or absurd moment which characterizes reportages as early as 'Taccuino di un viaggio in URSS: Una giornata nel Caucaso' (*Rinascita*, 9.3 (March 1952), 162-64; see also the reportages published in *L'Unità* between February and March 1952, now collected, together with 'Una giornata nel Caucaso', as *Taccuino di viaggio nell'Unione Sovietica* in Italo Calvino, *Saggi. 1945-1985*, II, pp. 2407-2496), both such occasional pieces and the more extended texts of the American 'diaries' seem to have much

(ii) Travelling, Writing, Translating

Calvino's refusal to write an 'unliterary' travel book, coupled with his interest in the formal and conceptual problems raised by the experience and the narrativization of travel, led him to attempt a highly literary transposition of the genre. *Le città invisibili* is the result of this effort, and as such it has become a model and an icon of contemporary travel writing, as well as a constant reference for theorists interested in the practices of travel. This is particularly true in the Anglo-American context, where travel writing is more established as a genre, and the association of a highly literary work such as Calvino's with the label of 'travel' is not resisted by the critical establishment. Additionally, the issues raised by Calvino's text are among those currently at the core of the debate about travel and its representation, so that it is no surprise that scholars as well as writers should find in *Le città invisibili* images which appear to crystallize, with extreme clarity, their own concerns.

As noted in the previous section, one of Calvino's main theoretical interests was for the way in which all narrative implies a construction, a rewriting, a representation of reality which at once transfigures it and makes it apprehensible. It is

more in common with the early Calvino, at least partly influenced by the poetics of neorealism and the ideal of literature as social action and educational endeavour. On these issues see for instance I. Calvino, 'Il midollo del leone', *Una pietra sopra*, pp. 5-22 (first published in 1955). Ferretti (*Le capre di Bikini*, pp. 111-12 and pp. 154-55) notices that it is not unusual for Calvino's fiction (especially in the 1970s) to anticipate themes and solutions which are later picked up in his critical and journalistic production and culminate in the theorization of *Lezioni americane*. Ferretti's observations confirm the centrality, for Calvino, of a notion of literature as instrument of analysis and production of knowledge, rather than vehicle for the expression of pre-existing ideas and fixed points of view. Calvino touched upon his preference for the indirect expression of ideas via the written medium of a narrative text in the interview with Camon published in *Il mestiere di scrittore*: 'dell'espressione diretta delle mie idee e dei miei giudizi, diffido [...] Solo se il discorso è figurato, indiretto, non riducibile a termini generici, a facilonerie concettuali, cosciente delle proprie implicazioni, ambiguità, esclusioni, solo allora dice veramente qualcosa, non mente' (p. 183).

in this area that we can find points of contact between travel and narration, but also between these practices and that of translation. Calvino himself, in the passage from Palomar's Mexican travels quoted above, drew the connection between these three activities, which he understood as forms of transfer and communication — but also of necessary mystification — between different contexts, different cultures, and different worlds. The map, an emblem of travel which is also the model underlying the textual web of *Le città invisibili*, is for Calvino a figure of our effort to understand reality through representation, of our need to perform the job of the interpreter and the re-writer of a chaotic unwritten world²⁵ — and *Le città invisibili* opens with the image of the Khan who, unable to make sense of his sprawling empire, relies on Marco's tales (which he knows may well be lies) to keep some grasp of reality: 'Solo nei resoconti di Marco Polo, Kublai Kan riusciva a discernere, attraverso le muraglie e le torri destinate a crollare, la filigrana d'un disegno così sottile da sfuggire al morso delle termiti.'²⁶

The issues of representation and mystification are also central to another of Calvino's 1970s books, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Here Calvino's fictional writer questions himself on the feasibility of impersonal, objective writing: 'Potrò mai dire "oggi scrive", così come "oggi piove", "oggi fa vento"?'.²⁷ The symmetrical question, posed immediately afterwards, is 'si potrà dire "oggi

²⁵ According to Lino Gabellone ('Aporie del raccontare', *Nuova corrente*, special issue *Calvino/1*, ed. by Mario Boselli, 34.99 (January-June 1987), 125-46), for Calvino 'la mappa di un territorio è la rappresentazione analogica e simbolica che ci consente di entrare in rapporto, a distanza, con un reale in sé non conoscibile e lo rende così accessibile alla conoscenza' (p. 138). Gabellone also notes: 'La letteratura può servire a rivelare non il mondo in sé ma la nostra condizione difficile di interpreti, il nostro stare al mondo presi nelle mille maglie della rappresentazione, il rapporto, per finire, tra la rappresentazione nei suoi diversi modi storici e il mondo non-scritto come problema infinito del pensiero e del raccontare' (p. 144).

²⁶ *Le città invisibili*, pp. 13-14.

²⁷ *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, p. 176.

legge”[...]?” (p. 176). Both acts, the character admits, are typical and constitutive of the individual, and as such imply a necessary distortion of reality. In *Se una notte d’inverno un viaggiatore* the only solution to the inescapable tyranny of the individual consciousness is represented, paradoxically, by the mystification of the translator, Ermes Marana, whose work is indeed a fake, but at least a deeply truthful one, ‘verità alla seconda potenza’ (p. 180). Ermes Marana is one of Calvino’s most complex characters, and one of the most aptly named. His first name is a reminder of Hermes the trickster, god of travellers and of translators, who appears in *Lezioni americane* as:

Hermes-Mercurio, dio della comunicazione e delle mediazioni, sotto il nome di Toth inventore della scrittura, e che, [...] come “spirito di Mercurio” rappresenta anche il *principium individuationis*.

Mercurio, con le ali ai piedi, leggero e aereo, abile e agile e adattabile e disinvolto, stabilisce le relazioni degli dèi tra loro e quelle tra gli dèi e gli uomini, tra le leggi universali e i casi individuali, tra le forze della natura e le forme della cultura, tra tutti gli oggetti del mondo e tra tutti i soggetti pensanti. Quale migliore patrono potrei scegliere per la mia proposta di letteratura?²⁸

The surname Marana, on the other hand, echoes ‘marrano’ (a word often associated with ‘traitor’ in Italian) and might be a veiled reference to the notorious ‘traduttore traditore’ stereotype. But Marana was also the surname of the author of *L’esploratore turco*, a ‘spy-story’ and a travel book, published apocryphally, disguised as a translation from the Arabic of a manuscript discovered by chance by the author/translator in a Paris apartment.²⁹ Calvino’s Ermes Marana is indeed a traveller,

²⁸ *Lezioni americane*, p. 59. On the figure of Hermes in Calvino’s work see Giuseppe Conte, ‘Il tappeto di Eudossia’, in *Italo Calvino: La letteratura, la scienza, la città*, ed. by Giorgio Bertone (Genoa: Marietti, 1988), pp. 44-49.

²⁹ See A. J. Weitzman, ‘Introduction’, in G. P. Marana, *Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy*.

a translator, and a writer of apocryphal texts, and as such is himself a figure of literature, of the production of true representations, which are also necessarily falsifying translations (or vice versa).

Apocryphal writing, or rather the apocryphal effect created by 'opere che chiedono di essere lette come se fossero apocrifi',³⁰ is also a feature of *Le città invisibili*, which presents itself as a book modelled on an existing text, and whose main protagonists are historical figures whose stories are already part of the shared encyclopaedia of Western culture. In re-writing the story of Marco Polo's travels, Calvino gave an example of the practices of the 'scrittore-ladro', a figure of which he was later to speak in a conversation with the painter Tullio Pericoli, when he declared: 'Io ho sempre avuto coscienza di prendere dei prestiti, di fare degli omaggi, e in questo caso fare omaggio a un autore significa appropriarsi di qualcosa che è suo.'³¹ For Calvino the 'effetto di apocrifo', through which a writer attributes to another something which is in fact the invention of his own imagination, is an integral part of the process of literary production, and it may signal a kind of fidelity which actually runs deeper than one might expect:

gli innumerevoli autori che rifacendosi a un autore precedente hanno riscritto o interpretato una storia mitica o comunque tradizionale, l'hanno fatto per comunicare qualcosa di nuovo, pur restando fedeli all'immagine della tradizione, e per tutti loro nell'io del soggetto scrivente si possono distinguere uno o più livelli di realtà soggettiva individuale e uno o più livelli di realtà mitica o epica che trae materia dall'immaginario collettivo.³²

³⁰ C. Benedetti, *Pasolini contro Calvino*, pp. 89-114 (p. 90); Benedetti sees the 'effetto di apocrifo' as characterized by many of the traits often associated with postmodern texts (such as pastiche, irony, inauthenticity and widespread use of intertextual citations and polyphony), and interprets Calvino's use of this strategy as a form of escapism on the part of the author, '[che] non è morto, però vorrebbe morire' (p. 113).

³¹ Italo Calvino in conversation with Tullio Pericoli, quoted in Belpoliti, *L'occhio di Calvino*, p. 204.

³² 'I livelli della realtà in letteratura', p. 379.

It is this collective imagination, the encyclopaedic knowledge which goes with it, and the prestige it assigns to a figure such as that of Marco Polo and to his *Milione*, that Calvino was harnessing in writing *Le città invisibili*. Like so many travellers (and travel writers) before him, Calvino invokes the authority of other texts and other voices to validate his own. But his choice of model is unusual. Marco Polo is a notoriously unreliable narrator, whose authority has been questioned for centuries, and whose narrative is already doubly 'apocryphal': because it contains references and 'quotations' from innumerable other texts, and because it was in fact written not by Polo, but by the 'scrivano di romanzi d'avventura' Rustichello.³³ In *Le città invisibili*, Polo's reliability is indeed repeatedly questioned by the Khan, and the problem of textual authority and textual traditions is also raised by Marco himself, with a skilful *mise en abîme*, in connection with the city of Aglaura:

Antichi osservatori, che non c'è ragione di non supporre veritieri, attribuirono ad Aglaura il suo durevole assortimento di qualità, certo confrontandole con quelle d'altre città dei loro tempi. [...]

Se dunque volessi descriverti Aglaura tenendomi a quanto ho visto e provato di persona, dovrei dirti che è una città sbiadita, senza carattere, messa lì come vien viene. Ma non sarebbe vero neanche questo: a certe ore, in certi scorci di strade, vedi aprirsi davanti il sospetto di qualcosa d'inconfondibile, di raro, magari di magnifico; vorresti dire cos'è, ma tutto quello che s'è detto d'Aglaura finora imprigiona le parole e t'obbliga a ridere anziché a dire. (pp. 73-74)

Calvino's re-writing of *Il milione*, a story already affected by the 'apocryphal syndrome', is thus both an act of faithfulness and of mystification, and as such

³³ *Le città invisibili*, p. 143. On the polemics surrounding the authenticity of Polo's travels and the derivations of his tales see for instance Frances Wood, *Did Marco Polo Go to China?* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1995).

represents a complex interpretation of the problem of representation and of its cultural and deeply intertextual nature.

What takes Calvino's position even closer to contemporary theories of travel and translation is the link he draws between the issue of representation and that of identity, between the definition of the Self and the appropriation of the Other. In what is possibly the most quoted passage of *Le città invisibili*, Marco Polo confesses to the Khan that his apprehension of the innumerable worlds discovered in his travels is invariably filtered through the experience of the place which marks his origin and his identity:

— Sire, ormai ti ho parlato di tutte le città che conosco
 — Ne resta una di cui non parli mai.
 Marco Polo chinò il capo.
 — Venezia, — disse il Kan.
 Marco sorrise. — E di che altro credevi che ti parlassi?
 L'imperatore non batté ciglio. — Eppure non ti ho mai sentito fare il suo nome.
 E Polo: — Ogni volta che descrivo una città dico qualcosa di Venezia. (p. 94)³⁴

Just like Palomar in Japan, Marco, in all his travels, can only really see (and represent) the new through the experience of difference, that is through its comparison with a model which lies at the core of his identity and provides the basis for distinguishing between what is familiar and what is alien; a model which is so deeply inscribed to mark the boundary between what belongs to the Self and what

³⁴ For references to this passage and theme see for instance Francesca Bernardini Napoletano, *I segni nuovi di Italo Calvino: Da "Le cosmicomiche" a "Le città invisibili"* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1977), pp. 171-3; Bernardini Napoletano opens her discussion of *Le città invisibili* with the theme of the journey into memory, and quotes the passage on Venice. Guido Bonsaver, in a recent article on Calvino's use of semiotics deals with the same topos — and inserts the same quotation; see Guido Bonsaver, 'Il Calvino "semiotico": dalla crisi del romanzo naturalistico all'opera come macrotesto', *The Italianist*, 14 (1994), 160-94. Outside Italian criticism, the passage is just as popular. Marilyn Shneider, for instance, discusses the role of Venice in her essay 'Mr. Palomar and Invisible cities', in *Calvino Revisited*, ed. by Franco Ricci (Toronto and Ottawa: University of Toronto/Dovehouse, 1989), pp. 171-88.

belongs to the Other. Commenting on the passage just quoted, Rana Kabbani observes that the dialogue between Marco and the Khan spells out the circularity of the traveller's journey:

For Venice is implicit in the description of all other cities; it is not merely a place, but a method of comparison, an education, a system of belief, a literature and a mythology. The original city *forms* the traveller, provides him with his vision, predicts his reactions and produces his narrative. It guards him against dissipation [...] but it limits his ability to see.³⁵

Commenting on the same passage, Syed Manzurul Islam makes a similar point when he notices that 'since the representation of other cities hinges on the displaced repetition of the first city — the discursive place of enunciation and the site of origin — any critical engagement with accounts of travels must not begin with the scrutiny of other cities', but rather with 'the first city itself', constructing 'a genealogy of the traveller's point of departure'.³⁶

Travel narratives, like Marco's tales in Calvino's text, may then tell us more about the traveller and his/her cultural identity than they do about the places and people they purport to represent. But the distortions and mystifications imposed by this condition of travel are not without consequences for the Other, the represented, as Kabbani cogently points out:

In the course of reading travel narrative we have observed how certain images, once codified in language, become static and final. We have remarked how travellers depended on each other's testimony in forging their narrative: the place became the place they had read about, the natives functioned as the traveller

³⁵ *Imperial Fictions*, p. 114.

³⁶ *The Ethics of Travel*, pp. 71-72.

imagined they would do. It was a reductive method, but in critical times of political crisis [...] it served its narrator well.³⁷

Travel writing operates a translation of the Other into the language of the Self, a form of rewriting in which the genealogy of the traveller (his/her point of origin and his/her baggage of acquired images and knowledge) shapes the way in which s/he represents the world. By representing the Other in his/her own terms, the traveller/writer/translator also appropriates the Other — and the consequences of this process are far from being purely theoretical. Both translation and travel writing (at least when they imply contact between different languages and cultures) are ultimately forms of representation which bring something otherwise inaccessible within the grasp of a culture, make it available and, by doing so, reshape both the original message and the system into which it is transferred. Thus travel and the representations connected with it contribute to identity construction by allowing the recognition of the self and the formation of boundaries around it, the establishment of the frontiers with the Other through mechanisms of assimilation and contraposition. But travel also has a large role to play in the process of collective, or national identity construction: on the one hand it establishes external frontiers, marking, through its narration, the difference with the foreign; on the other it constructs internal walls which keep in, and mark as one, domestic, whole, what must be first unified and then kept together. Travel could in fact be counted as one of the founding myths of the nation, and certainly, as far as Italy is concerned, few figures — and narrations — have been as influential as Marco Polo and his *Milione*.

³⁷ *Imperial Fictions*, p. 114.

Marco Polo is a composite icon of Italian culture. He is one of the implicit referents of the fascist motto which described Italy as a nation of saints, inventors, poets and navigators (though Polo sailed the desert: a common metaphor, and one Calvino uses in *Le città invisibili*).³⁸ This motto is still current in popular imagination and the images of Polo and Columbus are still among the mythical inhabitants of the official Italian patriotic Pantheon. But Marco Polo, dictating his memoirs to Rustichello da Pisa while imprisoned in a Genoese jail, is also an emotional icon of a divided Italy: the Repubbliche marinare (Venice, Genoa, Amalfi and Pisa) are still one of the favourite chapters in Italian history textbooks, yet, with their constant battling, they mark unmistakably the absence of a unified Italian identity, at a time which is nevertheless classified as one of the peaks of Italian civilization. Furthermore, notwithstanding his association with national myths, Marco Polo remains a pan-European figure, not strictly Italian, in a period when Italy was only a geographical reality, and Venice was in fact even physically represented as a separate entity on maps.³⁹ His book was first written in the French/Italian language of Rustichello, who was himself already translating Marco's words. The original manuscript is lost, and what we have today is a series of rewritings in various languages, Tuscan, Latin, French, and so on.⁴⁰ Marco's book was thus first appropriated by a whole continent, and only later, and through a whole series of

³⁸ See for instance the description of the approach to the city of Despina (pp. 25-26), discussed below, in section iv.

³⁹ On the Hereford Mappa Mundi, for instance, Venice is clearly drawn as an island in the middle of the Adriatic Sea.

⁴⁰ Islam (*The Ethics of Travel*, p. 121) discusses the complex history of the genesis and reproduction of the text and comments: 'It is true that Marco Polo was born in Venice, but the whole of Europe claims him'.

filters, became one of the founding texts of a national culture.⁴¹ If only for this ambiguity, Marco deserves to be taken as a symbol of the complex figurations of individual and collective identity.

As a rewriting of *Il Milione* and a component of the long history of its ambiguous reception, *Le città invisibili* is then a particularly suitable example of the important role played by travel writing in constructing 'imagined communities'; and Calvino's exploration of the links between reality, representation and the apprehension of difference is emblematic of the way in which travel (and travel writing) shape the relationship between Self and Other, member of the community and stranger.⁴² In Calvino's book, the 'translation' operated by travel writing is revealed as a form of appropriation achieved through narrative construction and the rewriting of the Other into the words and the world of the Self. In its reciprocity with the Self, however, the otherness of travel becomes a mirror, a reflection of one's own

⁴¹ In its oldest version *Il Milione* bears no trace of a 'national' spirit and Onia Tiberi (editor of a 1916 edition of the book) uncomfortably remarked 'sono quelli i tempi, come tutti sanno, in cui ogni terra "che un muro ed una fossa serra" s'atteggia a Stato indipendente [...] I Polo dunque chiamano sé stessi i tre latini, e i loro connazionali sono da essi chiamati veneziani, genovesi e pisani, ma il nome d'Italia e l'appellativo di "italiano" non appaiono mai in questo libro' (O. Tiberi, in Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, commented by Onia Tiberi (Florence: Le Monnier, 1916), p. 6). However, by the time Ramusio included Polo's travels in his collections *Navigazioni e viaggi* (1550-59) Marco's text could be read in an Italian (or, more specifically, Venetian) perspective. In Ramusio's edition the word 'Italia' appears seven times, five of which are located in Ramusio's own preface, and the remaining two in the body of the text. 'Venezia' and its derivatives appear 105 times (the majority of which is to be found, once again, in Ramusio's introduction), while in the fourteenth-century Tuscan version 'Vinegia' was mentioned only eleven times. (All data have been obtained consulting the CD-ROM *Letteratura Italiana Zanichelli*, ed. by P. Stoppelli e E. Picchi (Zanichelli, Bologna, n.d.); the databank contains the texts of the following editions: G. B. Ramusio, *I viaggi di Marco Polo*, in *Navigazioni e viaggi*, ed. by M. Milanese (Turin: Einaudi, 1980); Marco Polo, *Il Milione*, ed. by V. Bertolucci Pizzorusso (Milan: Adelphi, 1973)). During the Fascist period Polo and his travels became emblematic of Italy's 'imperial vocation', as testified by the volume *I grandi viaggiatori: Avventure di terra e di mare*, narrated by Gustavo Brigante Colonna with illustrations by Golia, 3rd edn (UTET: Turin, 1944); the volume, which was included in the series *La scala d'oro: Biblioteca graduata per i ragazzi*, is aimed at nine-year-old boys. It opens with Marco Polo and ends with the Duca degli Abruzzi, who, lying in his Somalian grave, 'dorme, sentinella avanzata, nella più lontana terra d'Italia' (p. 113).

⁴² On the role of Polo's text in fashioning the Orient see Sergio Zoli, 'L'immagine dell'Oriente nella cultura italiana da Marco Polo al Settecento', *Storia d'Italia. Annali 5: Il paesaggio*, ed. by C. De Seta, pp. 45-123.

desires and phobias. Even the escapist dream of the exotic, the effort to redraw one's identity, is defeated in any attempt to come to terms with the Other through the traveller's own language, which inevitably reinforces the Self-Other opposition. Radically rewriting his/her own identity is as impossible for the traveller as not rewriting the Other: asked by the Khan whether he travels to re-live his past or to recover his future, Marco answers: 'L'altrove è uno specchio negativo. Il viaggiatore riconosce il poco che è suo, scoprendo il molto che non ha avuto e non avrà.'⁴³

(iii) Production and Reception

Le città invisibili is constructed on a dialogic assumption: Marco is narrating his travels to Kublai Khan, who in turn questions him, comments upon his tales (and the style of his telling), and at one point even proposes an exchange of roles, in which the Khan would become the narrator and Marco the listener.⁴⁴

The idea of the dialogic narrative text, theorized by Bakhtin, became popular in Italian critical circles in the 1970s. Calvino himself speaks of Bakhtin's model of 'romanzo dialogico' as 'una letteratura d'interrogazione e non di affermazione, di approssimazione e messa in discussione e non di definizione autoritaria',⁴⁵ and Marcello Carlini has spoken of 'dialogicità a tutto campo' for works such as *Palomar*, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*, and *Le città invisibili*, where 'i

⁴³ *Le città invisibili*, p. 35.

⁴⁴ 'D'ora in avanti sarò io a descrivere le città e tu verificherai se esistono e se sono come io le ho pensate' (p. 49).

⁴⁵ Calvino is comparing Bakhtin's model of dialogism (see *Discourse in the novel*) with Vittorini's 'romanzo di conversazione' in I. Calvino, 'Viaggio, dialogo, utopia', *Il ponte*, 29.7-8 (July-August 1973), 904-907 (p. 905).

personaggi guardano ciascuno dal suo punto di vista ed aprono al confronto dialettico ciò che vedono', so that, avoiding the monologism of a single narrating voice, 'la scrittura di Calvino dimette ogni presunzione di assolutezza e di esaustività [...] e assume a regola la relatività, *idest* un'autocoscienza ironica e la disponibilità tendenziale ad aprirsi e a consentire un "continua"'.⁴⁶

In *Le città invisibili*, however, Calvino not only displaces the monologism of the narrating voice, but uses the dialogic structure of the narrative to both mimic and pre-empt the metatextual act of reading. Within the frame of the book, Calvino enacts the production/reception dialogue on which all narration is constructed: the narrator, Marco, is faced by the Khan, who positions himself at the receiving end of the act of communication, but is also able to initiate and re-direct the process according to his own interests and desires.

There are, however, various peculiarities in the structure of this relationship as it is set up by Calvino,⁴⁷ and some of them directly concern the position of Marco and the Khan as, respectively, production and reception poles of travel writing. The traditional narrative structure of travel accounts looks backwards (or forward, given

⁴⁶ Marcello Carlino, 'Il discorso-silenzio e i racconti "possibili" di Calvino', *Nuova corrente*, special issue *Calvino/1*, 107-23 (p. 120). Similar opinions are expressed by Francesco Muzzioli in 'Polvere di utopia', *Nuova corrente*, special issue *Calvino/1*, 147-56: 'la funzione del narratore risulta complicata dalla pluralizzazione e dallo sdoppiamento. La voce narrante è strappata a un personaggio fisso per trascorrere, impersonale testimone, a colpi di metamorfosi e precipitose contrazioni temporali, lungo tutta la scala delle storie [...]; ed altrettanto diventa mutabile il timbro dello stile, che sempre più, nell'ultimo Calvino, si traveste mediante esercitazioni mimetiche e di *pastiche*' (p. 153). Carla Benedetti, in *Calvino contro Pasolini*, also mentions Bakhtin and dialogism in relation to Calvino, and speaks of 'l'adozione di una molteplicità di voci' as the means through which Calvino achieves 'l'effetto di apocrifo' (pp. 100-102); Benedetti, however, reduces Calvino's dialogism to a defensive strategy which is far from the model of dialogic text proposed by Bakhtin (pp. 107-08).

⁴⁷ For instance the Khan is the listener of oral narration, and as such has greater interactive power than a 'traditional' reader. On a different level, Giuseppe Dematteis has interpreted the dialogue between Marco and the Khan as a metaphor for the practices of geography and the different historical approaches to this discipline; see Giuseppe Dematteis 'La superficie e l'altrove: Dal Marco Polo di Italo Calvino al linguaggio delle cose nella geografia d'oggi', in *Italo Calvino*, ed. by G. Bertone, pp. 94-100.

the circularity of the trip) to the home audience. Unlike this standard paradigm, the structure of *Le città invisibili* does not imply a simple circular relationship between writer and reader: Marco does not narrate for his home audience — Italian or European or Western. He speaks for the Khan, who is himself Other, and in order to speak to him Marco has to learn and adopt the language of the Other.

There is a clear discrepancy between the Marco of *Il Milione* and the one rewritten by Calvino. The first returns home and then tells his tale, dictating it, via Rustichello, if not for Venetians, or indeed Italians, at least for a recognisable Western public, with which he identifies and which can, and is invited to, identify with the narrator. Calvino, instead, is fascinated by a more unusual relationship, a further translation: Marco tells the Khan (the Other) about places the Khan himself has never seen and Marco may be only imagining — they are in fact Other to both men; yet these places have been appropriated by the Khan — or will be, it could be argued, through their narration. Even Marco's hesitation in describing Venice to the Emperor can be read through this double mirror: describing the Other to an Other is different from describing one's own Self; besides, if narration is a form of appropriation — it might be tempting to speak of cannibalism, in the case of the Khan — describing one's Self (one's identity) to the Other may be equivalent to a loss of identity. If the deep mechanism of travel writing consists in translating the Other into the language of identity, the opposite trajectory is rather more dangerous.

So Calvino's version of Marco's tale is a narration for the Other which, significantly, excludes only the Home, avoiding its appropriation by the Other (the

Khan), as this might be unbearable for the traveller's identity. And yet Marco is always talking about Venice: he cannot but do so, in order to narrate all the rest.

There are two explanations for this latest twist. In terms of narrative structure, it is clear that the real public, Calvino's rather than Marco's audience, is the modern, Italian-European-Western reader.⁴⁸ A new series of translations then takes place, which uses cultural and linguistic traditions to create a complex, echoing text — echoing, that is, for the home audience which has developed those traditions and shares that language. In *Le città invisibili* Calvino makes a direct reference to this process of rewriting which takes place each time a different audience is projected by the text:

Io parlo, parlo, — dice Marco, — ma chi m'ascolta ritiene solo le parole che aspetta. Altra è la descrizione del mondo cui tu presti benigno orecchio, altra quella che farà il giro dei capannelli di scaricatori e gondolieri sulle fondamenta di casa mia il giorno del mio ritorno, altra ancora quella che potrei dettare in tarda età, se venissi fatto prigioniero da pirati genovesi e messo in ceppi nella stessa cella con uno scrivano di romanzi d'avventura. Chi comanda al racconto non è la voce: è l'orecchio. (p. 143)

At the same time, and coincidentally, both Calvino and his Marco cannot but use one language (the one they know and share with their respective audiences) in order to translate the new, the unknown, the not yet spoken, written, codified. As with translation, so with travel writing, the option of perfect equivalence is not available. As noted by Mary Campbell 'the traveller in foreign parts is faced with a world for which his language is not prepared: no matter how naive the writer's understanding of

⁴⁸ This is a condition of literature debated by Calvino in 'I livelli della realtà in letteratura', where he reminds the readers that they should never forget the first, metaliterary, level of reality implied by all narrative: the 'io scrivo' which must be the premise of even the most complex of narrative structures ("Io scrivo che Omero racconta che Ulisse dice: io ho ascoltato il canto delle Sirene.", p. 380).

language, the option of simple transparency, of verbal equivalence, is not open.⁴⁹ So Marco's Venice becomes the image on which all other images of cities can be constructed, using the mechanisms of analogy and contrast. Even while the Khan is marvelling at the Venetian's mastery of the emperor's own language, Marco is still using some of his own deep, constitutive images to describe the new and the unexpected.

(iv) Models and Re-Writings

An analysis of the language of *Le città invisibili* can point out the images and traditions on which Calvino himself is building, and it can also highlight areas of contact between this book and many of the travel pieces the writer produced over the years as part of his collaborations with newspapers and journals.⁵⁰

In *Le città invisibili*, Calvino 're-writes' *Il milione*,⁵¹ and also draws on a series of more recent models, ranging from Victor Sklovskij's *Le voyage de Marco Polo* to Vittorini's *Le città del mondo*,⁵² all of which allow him to play with

⁴⁹ *The Witness and the Other World*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ The following examples are not intended to be exhaustive; parallels can and have been found with many other genres, starting as early as the classical Pastoral (John Penwill, 'Images of the City in Virgil, Calpurnius and Calvino', paper given at the British Comparative Literature Association 7th International Conference, *Cities, Gardens, Wildernesses*, Edinburgh, July 1995). This section concentrates on echoes relative to genres closely related to travel writing.

⁵¹ Francesca Bernardini Napoletano notes that '*Le città invisibili* si pongono volutamente "in parallelo" con *Il Milione*, sviluppando, a livello tematico e stilistico, alcuni spunti precisi del modello, con riferimenti espliciti all'opera di Marco Polo, che creano intorno a *Le città invisibili* un alone denso di suggestioni favolose e di echi letterari' (*I segni nuovi di Italo Calvino*, p. 170).

⁵² Victor, Sklovskij, *Le voyage de Marco Polo* (Paris: Payot, 1938); the Italian translation appeared as *Marco Polo* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1972); on the relationship between Calvino's text and Sklovskij's see Carlo Ossola, 'L'invisibile e il suo "dove": "geografia interiore" di Italo Calvino', *Lettere italiane*, 39.1 (January-March 1987), 220-51 (pp. 238-39). Elio Vittorini's *Le città del mondo* was published posthumously in 1969 (Einaudi: Turin); on the relationship between *Le città invisibili* and Vittorini's text see F. Camon, 'Italo Calvino', pp. 195-96.

intertextual references and to harness the authority of his predecessors. But he also relies on the whole Western tradition of travel writing, exploiting the tendency of the genre towards hybridity and inclusiveness in order to create his own unique brand of hyper-literary travels. Calvino's complex procedure amounts to a kind of internal hybridization, which mixes elements taken from various points in the evolution of travel writing (and many of its subgenres), producing a book which is both a *summa* of and an intensely original contribution to the genre.

One of the oldest models for Calvino's text is that of the *Wonders of the East*, the fabulous books of marvels and symbols produced in Medieval European literature. The Marco Polo of *Il Milione* is still influenced, possibly via Rustichello, by that style and language, while also developing a personal type of narration which moves him closer to the modern figure of the narrator.⁵³ Probably the most famous example of the exoticising power of *Il Milione* is to be found in its fabulous animals: the unicorns with the hair of a buffalo and the feet of an elephant; or the great adders with short legs and three claws, like a falcon's or a lion's, instead of feet.⁵⁴ Marco's monsters are in fact perfectly real animals (a rhino and a crocodile, respectively) turned into fantastic beasts by a language which — through analogy and contrast — refers back to the mythical monsters inhabiting the borders of the world in medieval maps and wonder books.

Calvino cannot reach the same effect in exactly the same way, since his late-twentieth-century audience is by now used to and abused by exoticism; so he exploits the chichés creating a pastiche: what we get is camel humps and TV aerials,

⁵³ On the subject see M. B. Campbell, *The Witness and the Other World*.

⁵⁴ See *Marco Polo: The Description of the World*, p. 166 and p. 119.

aluminium towers and drawbridges, biblical images of riches next to a modern harbour dock. The same effect is to be found in the travel sketches of Japan included in *Collezione di sabbia*. Here the technique is more transparent, but it is exactly the same:

Tutt'a un tratto il signor Fuji trasale, indica un punto invisibile tra le antenne della televisione e dice che là mille anni fa sorgeva una reggia o che un poeta passeggiava sulla riva d'un lago. L'abisso che si spalanca tra le scene evocate e ciò che si vede ora non sembra turbarlo: il nome collega lo spazio col tempo, quel punto su una mappa sconvolta resta depositario del mito.

La storia che racconta ora tratta d'un imperatore innamorato d'una dama bellissima e altera, che abitava laggiù (dietro quella stazione di servizio?).⁵⁵

The effect of time on reality and on language — that fourth dimension which in *Le città invisibili* has been squashed, for effect, into an apparent mono-dimensionality, into the timeless, a-historical rhythms of a narration mostly carried out in the present tense — here shows its potential for estrangement, defamiliarization, or *ostranenie* as Russian formalists used to call it, and as theorists of translation still call it.⁵⁶

The play of archaic words and neologisms is possibly never stronger than in the names of the cities themselves: Diomira, Isidora, Dorotea, Zaira, Anastasia, Zora, Despina, Zirma, Isaura: female names, with exotic echoes; Biblical, Oriental, but also terribly similar to some of the names we are used to finding in science fiction films and books: Zirma would have made a wonderful name for a *Star Wars* princess; Valdrada sounds like her evil rival; Eutropia is the kind of construct we expect from

⁵⁵ 'Il novantanovesimo albero', *Collezione di sabbia*, pp. 201-2 (p. 202).

⁵⁶ See Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 99-101.

Blade Runner.⁵⁷ As in the case of *ostranenie*, another parallel can be drawn here between the linguistic strategies of travel writing and those of translation. Lawrence Venuti in *The Translator's Invisibility* calls for archaism as one of the key instruments for the translator who wants to refute dominant fluency strategies and intends instead to highlight the innovative, disruptive potential of the translated text and of the translation practice — and although this may not be the only effect one can hope to achieve through the use of archaism, Calvino certainly manages to produce unusual, incantatory and often surprising effects.⁵⁸

Echoes of Calvino can also be found in a different tradition of travel writing, that of the discovery narratives. The metaphor of 'sailing the desert', for instance, which connects Marco Polo to the 'navigatori' of the Italian imagination, is introduced by Calvino in the description of Despina (one of the cities of desire), which is viewed from two different perspectives: the camel driver, coming from the desert, sees it as a ship; the mariner, arriving from the sea, imagines it as a camel; both structure their description on the sequences of successive horizons, the mixture of imaginary and real vision which is typically found in the narrations of Renaissance navigators as they finally approach the new land. The relief at the sight of the goal, the mirage of riches and the desire for rest at the end of the long sailing, ...: everything is dominated by the gaze of the traveller/hero, his ego, his reading of the new world.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Some of the echoes can be even more contingent — and somewhat ironic: one can wonder, for instance, how many Italian readers of the 1970s and 80s could read about Dorotea without thinking (perhaps sardonically) of one of the main internal factions of the Christian Democrat party. On the use of female names in Calvino's text see for instance Giuseppe Conte, 'Il tappeto di Eudossia'. On the connection between Calvino's work and science fiction (a link mostly drawn in Anglo-American contexts) see R. West, 'L'identità americana di Calvino'.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the uses of archaism in translation and travel writing.

⁵⁹ Mary B. Campbell (*The Witness and the Other World*) describes similar techniques in her discussion of Columbus as the 'romance hero' of his Journals (p. 184) and of Sir Walter Raleigh's 'inward feeling', his concentration on the narrator's experience of the new world (p. 221). Nicola Bottiglieri

A further example of a tradition exploited by Calvino in *Le città invisibili* can be found in the orderly and ordering eye of the naturalist and traveller. This has been analysed as one of the typical elements of eighteenth- and especially nineteenth-century European travel writing: cataloguing objects, placing them in their relative position, the taxonomic travel writing of geographers and anthropologists (or other, unqualified but like-minded travellers) also constructed a scale of values based on the myth of natural progress, and as a result justified a hierarchy of beings and civilizations.⁶⁰ Calvino (who, in *Collezione di sabbia*, confesses 'la mia vita funziona a base di elenchi: rendiconti di cose lasciate in sospeso, progetti che non vengono realizzati')⁶¹ organizes the structure of *Le città invisibili* on what looks like a systematic plan: each place is classified under headings such as 'cities and memory', 'cities and desire', 'cities and signs'.⁶² Yet the dominant feeling remains that of the pastiche: the initial scheme seems to proliferate beyond control and, whatever the interpretation given of the result, *Le città invisibili* is clearly not the work of a positivist taxonomist.⁶³

calls Columbus 'l'ammiraglio dello sguardo', and compares his writing ('sguardo fatto parola') to the ideas on 'visibilità' in Calvino's *Lezioni Americane*; see N. Bottiglieri, *Nel verde mare delle tenebre*, p. 111 and p. 123 respectively.

⁶⁰ This was, for instance, the conscious or unconscious intention of the scientific travel writing of Alexander von Humboldt and of his 'reinvention of America' (the phrase is taken from Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, pp. 111-43 (p. 111)); on science and travel see also J. Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

⁶¹ 'La luce negli occhi', *Collezione di sabbia*, pp. 123-9 (p. 123).

⁶² This complex scheme is discussed in JoAnn Cannon, *Italo Calvino: Writer and Critic* (Ravenna: Longo, 1981); C. Ossola, 'L'invisibile e il suo "dove"', pp. 238-48; and Aldo Rossi, 'La semiologia', in *Italo Calvino: Atti del convegno internazionale — Firenze, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi 26-28 febbraio 1987*, ed. by Giovanni Falaschi (Milan: Garzanti, 1988), pp. 239-59. A far less structuralist interpretation of the internal organization of *Le città invisibili* was given by Pier Paolo Pasolini in a 1973 review which is the starting point of Rossi's analysis; Pasolini wrote that *Le città invisibili* is 'il libro di un ragazzo. Solo un ragazzo può avere da una parte un umore così radioso, così cristallino, così disposto a far cose belle, resistenti, rallegranti; e solo un ragazzo, d'altra parte, può avere tanta pazienza — da artigiano, che vuol a tutti i costi finire e rifinire il suo lavoro. Non i vecchi, i ragazzi sono pazienti' (quoted in Rossi, p. 257).

⁶³ See Bonsaver, 'Il Calvino "semiotico"', p. 184; and Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, 'La lingua dello scrittore', in *Italo Calvino*, ed. by G. Falaschi, pp. 203-23.

Of the Grand Tour conventions, finally, Calvino absorbs various elements. The most immediate and macroscopic point of contact is the focus on the city: the goal of the classic Grand Tourist was represented by a string of great cities, connected by dark passages along dirty roads;⁶⁴ and Calvino, as we have seen, praised the city as one of the most complex symbols, the one which gave him the chance to express the tension between rational geometry and the chaotic nature of human lives.⁶⁵

A further characteristic Calvino absorbed from the Grand Tour tradition is the use of stereotypes. He refused to see them as purely negative products of a rising mass culture, and, reviewing a volume on the Grand Tour published in Italy in the 1980s, he remarked:

...un paese comincia a essere presente nella memoria quando a ogni nome si collega un'immagine, che come tale non vuol dire niente altro che quel nome, con quel tanto d'arbitrario e quel tanto di motivato o motivabile che ogni nome porta con sé. Le Torri Pendenti e le Moli Antonelliane non sono altro che sigle iconiche sintetiche, stemmi o allegorie.⁶⁶

The formulaic quality of the language of *Le città invisibili*, with its stratagems of archaism, pastiche, time condensation, finds its justification in this quality of stereotypes: their ability to stand for and give identity to the object, the community, the country. What is significant in the relationship between production and reception, between the travel writer (or translator) and its audience, is the ability of the language,

⁶⁴ For a discussion of this model of the journey see Cesare De Seta, 'L'Italia nello specchio del Grand Tour', pp. 133-4.

⁶⁵ *Lezioni americane*, p. 80.

⁶⁶ 'La città pensata: la misura degli spazi', *Collezione di Sabbia*, pp. 111-5 (p. 115). Calvino is reviewing *Storia d'Italia, Annali, 5, Il paesaggio*, ed. by C. De Seta.

of the discourse, to establish identity, even though that identity will be made of stereotypes — which are possibly entirely false.⁶⁷

What guarantees the relationship between reader and writer is not the truthfulness of the tale, but the authority of the language: it is the discourse which spells the truth, not the object; not reality but its unavoidable construction. In another of the Japanese sketches collected in *Collezione di sabbia* Calvino describes the relationship between language and reality in the following terms:

Il linguaggio (ogni linguaggio) costruisce una mitologia, e questo modo d'essere mitologico coinvolge anche ciò che si credeva esistesse indipendentemente dal linguaggio. Da quando il linguaggio fa la sua comparsa nell'universo, l'universo assume il modo d'essere del linguaggio, e non può manifestarsi se non seguendone le regole.⁶⁸

The same relationship is also discussed in *Le città invisibili*, where the theme of truthfulness and deceit becomes prominent:

Nessuno sa meglio di te, saggio Kublai, che non si deve mai confondere la città col discorso che la descrive. Eppure tra l'una e l'altro c'è un rapporto. [...]

Questo forse non sai: che per dire d'Olivia non potrei tenere altro discorso. Se ci fosse un'Olivia davvero di bifore e pavoni, di sellai e tessitori di tappeti, e canoe e estuari, sarebbe un misero buco nero di mosche, e per descrivertelo dovrei fare ricorso alle metafore della fuliggine, dello stridere di ruote, dei gesti ripetuti, dei sarcasmi. La menzogna non è nel discorso, è nelle cose. (pp. 67-68)⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Calvino, in the paragraph immediately after the one just quoted, gives the example of a film by Lubitsch in which a Venetian gondolier sings '*O sole mio*': in its entire falsity this is a perfect icon for tourist Italy, and one which has already transformed itself into reality.

⁶⁸ 'La foresta degli dei', *Collezione di sabbia*, pp. 213-5 (p. 215).

⁶⁹ The theme of truthfulness and deceit in *Le città invisibili* is discussed in G. Dematteis, 'La superficie e l'altrove', and in Giorgio Bárberi Squarotti, 'Dal Castello a Palomar: Il destino della letteratura', in *Italo Calvino*, ed. by G. Falaschi, pp. 329-46.

Discourse⁷⁰ does not lie, and yet it must lie in order to operate the translation of the new into the known, of the Other into the language of the Self. The destiny of the travel writer, like that of the translator, is to be trapped between a presumption of innocence and an assumption of guilt. Innocence, equivalence, transparency, are not an option — unless we are prepared to discard, or rethink, the issue of identity.

The interplay of experience, memory, imagination, literary traditions and reader's (or listener's) expectations, lying at the heart of the travel text, can be analysed, as in the case of *Le città invisibili*, through its linguistic features; it is a discourse which typically combines analogy and contrast, archaic usage and neologism in an attempt to reconcile the double role played by all travel accounts (all *translatio* of the unknown into the known): that of the faithful factual reporter — the witness — and that of the rhetorical intercultural interpreter — the liar. The reconciliation, though, cannot take place: each witness remains a liar. Yet the lie is not in the discourse, it's in the thing: travel discourse is true to itself, to its function; but the gaze of the traveller cannot be innocent, the thing observed can only lie to him/her, in its need to be interpreted, cognitively apprehended, appropriated in the double edged process of identity construction.

⁷⁰ In his English version of the passage just quoted, Weaver twice translates *discorso* as 'words', but it should be noted that Calvino uses the term very consciously here (as he often does in his critical writings), in a sense which is near the one given to it by Foucault (see F. Camon, 'Italo Calvino', p. 193). It is interesting to note that Weaver's translation of *Le città invisibili* is the most 'faithful' of all those analysed in the present study: no substantial cuts or editorial changes have been made, and even the translator's manipulation of the syntax of the text is quite limited. While this may be connected with Calvino's effort to achieve a linear and limpid prose, and to the stylized, synthetic quality of the resulting text, it is also possible that the prestige and high 'literary' status of the writer favoured a translation strategy based on the ideal of faithfulness. Similar speculations make Weaver's choice to translate 'discorso' as 'words' all the more interesting, as this might be interpreted as either not perceiving or voluntarily ignoring a reference to the technical vocabulary of contemporary critical theory — rather than to the literary repertoire.

(v) Witnesses and Liars

Both Calvino's Marco and his Khan are travellers in a sense which amplifies — and diverges from — contemporary meanings of the word, dominated by the advent of mass tourism and package tours. Marco is a merchant and a narrator, an ambassador and a reporter; he is also a stranger who has mastered the language of the Other; unlike the rest of the messengers, who 'in lingue incomprensibili al Kan [...] riferivano notizie intese in lingue a loro incomprensibili' (p. 29), Marco describes the cities in a way which has 'il potere degli emblemi, che una volta visti non si possono dimenticare né confondere' (p. 29). Marco, then, is a good translator, able to communicate new meaning to things. As for the Khan, he does not travel, not even as a sentimental tourist: he is the emperor, the core of the empire, which stays still and yet manages to absorb and possess all the rest, in his cannibalistic feasting on Marco's translation of the world outside his palace. His aim is to reach total control: "Se ogni città è come una partita a scacchi, il giorno in cui arriverò a conoscerne le regole possiederò finalmente il mio impero" (p. 127). The risk he runs, as with all essentialism, is to reduce the entire world to nothing: 'la conquista definitiva [...] si riduceva a un tassello di legno piallato, il nulla' (p. 129). So the Khan, like the empire, needs Marco and his tales of travel and otherness, to keep the identity game going, to keep the discourse of his power alive.

Yet it is in the interstices of travel and narration, in the tight dialogism of voices, that we can also find another solution to the issues of identity and power raised by Calvino's text: it is the questioning at the heart of the construction of the

self embodied by contemporary travel and travel writing (including Calvino's 'sublimation' of the genre) which is promising for what can be called their translational practices. Thus the mystified post-modern reality of mass-travel and tourism may well lead to the end of travel and the growth of a continuous infernal city,⁷¹ but they might also end up giving birth to a new kind of traveller: a witness who is at least aware of lying, by definition, but who, like the translator, is no longer afraid of his (or her) visibility; no longer framed by the myth of fidelity to the original; and much more aware of the implications of the multiple production-reception relationships implicit in travel writing — and in all forms of translation. From this different standpoint, Calvino's Marco, with his multiple allegiances, languages, identities, is an acceptable precursor, and so is the Khan, with his acknowledgement of the inevitable fraud implicit in Marco's tales:

Non è detto che Kublai Kan creda a tutto quel che dice Marco Polo quando gli descrive le città visitate nelle sue ambascerie, ma certo l'imperatore dei tartari continua ad ascoltare il giovane veneziano con più curiosità e attenzione che ogni altro suo messo o esploratore.⁷²

Reality and fiction, truth and mystification, voice and ear, narration and reception are foregrounded by Calvino as essential issues in the literature of travel. And it is precisely because of this literary transfiguration, this distilled, crystal-like concentration of the theoretical issues raised by travel and its narration, that *Le città invisibili* can be seen as an icon of travel writing: in translating the experience of travel into the highly stylized literary language of *Le città invisibili*, Calvino created a

⁷¹ The image is evoked by the Khan at the end of Calvino's book (p. 170).

⁷² *Le città invisibili*, p. 13.

text which embodies the theoretical preoccupations with identity, textuality, and representation which are at the heart of the current interest in the genre — and in his ‘transfiguration’ of the theme of travel he also provided the ultimate example of the hybridizing potential of the travel book.

7. DIFFERENT JOURNEYS ALONG THE RIVER: CLAUDIO MAGRIS'S *DANUBIO* AND ITS TRANSLATION

(i) A Problem of Genre

On the dust-jacket of the English translation of Claudio Magris's *Danubio*, John Banville's critical assessment of the book stands out for its epigrammatic conciseness: '*Danube* is "international" in the best, Jamesian sense; it is also, I believe, a masterpiece.'¹ This apparently simple statement opens up a series of possible questions: what is *Danubio* a masterpiece of, and how exactly are this masterpiece and its translation 'international'? This chapter deals with the problem of genre as it applies to Magris's book, and with the ramifications of the problem once we consider not only the original but also its translations — which have turned *Danubio* into that rare thing: an Italian book capable of international success.² The intention is not to advocate rigid generic distinctions, but rather to argue that *Danubio*'s resistance to rigid genre categorization was in fact one of the most important factors in its wide European success. As noted in Chapter 2, the 'horizons of expectation' activated by a particular text, including its generic affiliation, can shift when that text moves across cultures and

¹ All quotations in this article refer to the second edition of the book in the paperback collection Gli Elefanti (Milan: Garzanti, 1991), and to the second impression of the second edition of Patrick Creagh's English translation (London: Collins Harvill, 1991).

² According to the Spanish edition, when *Danubio* was published in Italy it sold more than 400,000 copies in one year: see Claudio Magris, *El Danubio*, trans. by Joaquín Jorda', 4th edn (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1994). The book has also been extremely successful abroad; for details of translations and their *fortuna*, see Umberto Eco, *Claudio Magris: Autori e traduttori a confronto*, ed. by Ljiljana Avirovic and John Dodds (Udine: Campanotto, 1993); and Ernestina Pellegrini, *Epica sull'acqua: L'opera letteraria di Claudio Magris* (Bergamo: Moretti & Vitali, 1997). *Danubio*'s international success is not typical of contemporary Italian literature; for an analysis of the negative balance between imports and exports of literature in contemporary Italy see: Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 12-17; and Tim Parks, 'Bella Cinderella', *The Sunday Times*, 6 August 1989, pp. 8-9.

canons through the process of translation.³ We can then ask whether translation strategies act towards the reinforcement of existing horizons of expectations or militate against them, a question which is particularly significant when applied to a book such as *Danubio*, with its intrinsic ambiguity — or complexity — with respect to traditional generic and stylistic criteria.

Claudio Magris's *Danubio* has been translated into all major (and most minor) European languages — and successfully marketed throughout Europe. Yet the book has been presented (and manipulated) in different ways according to the culture each translation was targeted for, allowing for conspicuous generic shifts.

In Italy the book was sold as 'un itinerario fra romanzo e saggio', 'un piccolo Decamerone danubiano', rich in 'minuziosa documentazione erudita che diventa materia di finzione e di digressione fantastica' — as well as 'racconti di un viaggiatore sterniano'.⁴ The author, Claudio Magris, was portrayed as a university professor born, bred and teaching in Trieste: both qualifications are relevant, since his origins and his specialism make him an expert but also somehow an exponent of that Mitteleuropa he is writing about.⁵ At the time of its launch the volume was placed in the series I saggi blu (where 'saggi' is the operative word) next to a book on Montaigne by the critic Giacomo Debenedetti and, interestingly, to Italo Calvino's *Collezione di sabbia*, a collection of essays which includes his reportages from Japan, Mexico and other places.⁶ The motto

³ Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 22.

⁴ All quotations are taken from the paperback edition mentioned above.

⁵ Magris is indeed a specialist of German and Mitteleuropean culture and literature. In Italy he has become 'the' expert on Mitteleuropa and is virtually responsible for single-handedly making the word popular, especially thanks to his book *Il mito asburgico nella letteratura austriaca moderna* (Turin: Einaudi, 1963). Magris also writes on Triestine authors and on Triestine culture, its ex-centric nature and its multiple components; on this last subject see Claudio Magris, *Itaca e oltre* (Milan: Garzanti, 1982) and Angelo Ara and Claudio Magris, *Trieste: Un'identità di frontiera*, 2nd rev. edn (Turin: Einaudi, 1987).

⁶ The affinity between *Danubio* and *Collezione di sabbia* is noted by Stefano Tani (*Il romanzo di ritorno*, p. 85), one of the very few Italian critics who mention the notion of travel writing in connection with both books: 'Metafora della complessità del concetto di identità nazionale, romanzo nascosto, *Danubio* è un esempio di quella rara geografia mentale che solo autori di grande respiro intellettuale e di grande generosità umana e creativa riescono a produrre. Come accade in un'altra magistrale collezione di pensieri

of *Saggi blu* is 'Leggere e vivere la cultura', and publicity issued by the publisher Garzanti stressed the learned and literary quality of Magris's book, while at the same time playing down the travel label: in the captions travel is immediately qualified as interior, metaphorical, or sentimental, while a label such as 'travelogue' is carefully avoided.⁷

Similar remarks are to be found in the reviews published by quality papers and specialist literary periodicals. A few days before the publication of the book, *Tuttolibri*, the literary supplement of *La Stampa*, featured an interview with the author by Gabriella Ziani entitled 'Magris: sul Danubio ho ritrovato il cuore dell'Europa. L'autore triestino ci parla del suo nuovo romanzo-saggio'. The main themes of *Danubio*'s Italian reception are set out in this title: the ambiguous, 'unidentified' quality of the book, hovering between the novel and the essay; the Triestine identity of the author, which already qualifies him as a Mitteleuropean, rather than strictly an Italian; and the interior, quest-like nature of the trip. The theme of travel makes an appearance at the beginning of the article: Ziani qualifies *Danubio* as a new departure for Magris, 'un nuovo libro, totalmente diverso dai precedenti: un saggio innervato di romanzo, il *reportage* di una lunga serie di viaggi, quasi un'autobiografia, e nello stesso tempo il ritratto vero e vissuto di paesi e popoli lungo il Danubio'.⁸ Many of Ziani's remarks refer to elements which in an Anglo-American context have come to be considered typical of travel writing: the factual and autobiographical nature of the trip, the attention to details of

e di ricordi di viaggio, *Collezione di sabbia* [...] di Italo Calvino, il critico scrittore trova qui la sua voce personale, il peculiare e delicato equilibrio dei poli narrativo e saggistico fra cui la sua opera si muove.'

⁷ The book was published at the beginning of November 1986; during November and December advertisements placed by Garzanti featured captions such as the following (taken from the *Corriere della Sera*, 12 November 1986, p. 1): 'Incontri e racconti discendendo il vecchio fiume'; 'Il viaggiatore è un curioso, l'anima leggera di bagaglio e il dono di ricreare la Storia anche dal più piccolo indizio. Questo è il libro di Magris, che discende il "vecchio fiume" dalle sorgenti al Mar Nero, in un viaggio personale e in un racconto delle culture e degli uomini — individui e popoli — che hanno abitato o abitano le sue sponde'; 'un viaggio sentimentale dalle sorgenti del Danubio al Mar Nero, una metafora dell'esistenza e un'avventura nella crisi contemporanea'.

⁸ Gabriella Ziani, 'Magris: Sul Danubio ho ritrovato il cuore dell'Europa', *Tuttolibri*, 12.525 (1 November 1986), 4-5.

places and people, filtered by the eye of the traveller who paints their portrait. It is soon clear, however, that it was through Magris's own words that such elements infiltrated the critical discourse: that initial description is in fact a summary of comments made by Magris and reported later in the article. Asked 'Che cosa sarà *Danubio*?' the author replies:

Una specie di Guida Michelin [...] e un viaggio sentimentale alla maniera di Sterne. [...] C'è una cornice di personaggi inventati, ma quello che scrivo è tutto rigorosamente vero, quindi è senza dubbio un saggio, ma con l'ambizione che vi siano, dietro le infinite cose di cui si parla, anche altri piani di scrittura e lettura. Una specie di romanzo sommerso: scrivo della civiltà danubiana, ma anche dell'occhio che la guarda. (p. 4-5)

Later on we are told that Magris does not hesitate to define his book as 'una fatica di precisione e di erudizione, temperate entrambe da un "ironia molto austriaca". "È una galleria di tipi umani — spiega — di passioni, ho tentato un *Giudizio universale*. E l'ho fatto con la sensazione di scrivere la mia autobiografia"' (p. 5).

Of all these themes, the ones which were taken up by reviewers after the publication of the volume tend to be those of erudition, the historical portrait of cultures, and the interior quest, together with the generic ambiguity encapsulated in the label of 'romanzo-saggio'; the other provocations tried out by Magris on his interviewer were either avoided or marginalized.⁹

In February 1987 *L'indice dei libri del mese* published a review of *Danubio* by Gian Luigi Beccaria. The reviewer stressed the literariness of the book and its continuous metamorphosis of reality: the 'eventuale Bedaecker coltissimo si tramuta in

⁹ Writing in the *Corriere della Sera*, for instance, Oreste del Buono qualified Magris as 'saggista', 'germanista', 'saggista della Mitteleuropa' and 'germanista nato a Trieste'. The importance of these identity-tags becomes clearer when we read Del Buono's observation that it is 'tipico degli scrittori triestini arrivare anche alla narrativa', and that '*Danubio* è un romanzo critico' because 'l'autore è un germanista'; O. del Buono, 'Una vita lungo il Danubio: il viaggio intellettuale di Claudio Magris', *Corriere della Sera*, 18 November 1986, p.3.

uno struggente romanzo-saggio'; the entire book is 'un saggio sul plurale, sul metamorfico', and plays on the 'perenne divario tra l'immediato e gli echi, l'evocazione del lontano, che sta dietro le cose'; Magris's artistic skill lies 'nel sovrapporre continuamente vicino e lontano [...] con alto tasso di consapevolezza di "assenze" sottese che sono momenti di una serie ininterrotta di metamorfosi'. The literary quality of *Danubio* is such that it can also be described as 'un poema sulla lontananza, sull'andare lontano e sul venire da lontano' which rightly closes with the quotation of verses dedicated by a Triestine poet to death, seen as 'un congiungersi con il "mar grande"'. Beccaria himself opened and closed the article with a reminder of the intellectual stature of Magris, remarking, on both occasions, that it was precisely this intellectual stature which guaranteed that, if the superficial structure of the book was that of a pleasant trip, its deep structure was quite something else.¹⁰

By the end of November the book had won the *Premio Bagutta*, one of the main Italian literary prizes, and *Tuttolibri* had titled 'Magris vince il "Bagutta" — Per il suo saggio-romanzo *Danubio*'. The article noticed again the fact that Magris was primarily a literary critic and a journalist who had only recently turned to narrative; the book was qualified as 'a metà fra la narrazione e la riflessione' and described as a cultural, rather than factual, trip; Mario Soldati, another 'writer-cum-journalist' and the president of the jury for the *Bagutta*, was reported to have said in the motivation for the prize that only Magris could have written such a book, given his deep knowledge of Mitteleuropa.¹¹

¹⁰ The opening paragraph points out that *Danubio* cannot be a 'learned Bedaecker' because Magris the scholar had first encountered all the places and peoples mentioned in books, and had internalized them so much that on meeting them for real they became a portrait of himself, and he found himself again in them; Gian Luigi Beccaria, 'Anse', *L'indice dei libri del mese*, 4.2 (February 1987), 13.

¹¹ 'Magris vince il Bagutta', *Tuttolibri*, 12.529 (29 November 1986), p. 7; the article is signed S.M. A few years afterwards, when Magris published *Un altro mare* (Milan: Garzanti, 1991), reviews confirmed the same attitudes to Magris and *Danubio*; as an example see Michele Dell'Aquila, 'Claudio Magris: *Un altro mare*' in *Italianistica*, 20.3 (1991), 603-4. Dell'Aquila identifies Magris's typical writing as a 'genere misto ed ambiguo' (p. 604) and also offers the following remarks: 'Conosciamo l'autore, triestino intriso di salsedine adriatica che gli si sente ovunque, nell'urto della bora carsico/istriana e nelle sinuosità fluviali della Mitteleuropa ove s'aggira, sua patria dell'anima e terra di viaggi. [...] Magris è un professore, germanista valente, scrittore affascinante di cose danubiane. Il suo approdo alla scrittura d'invenzione si

On the same day of this article, *Danubio* appeared for the first time in the best-sellers list of *Tuttolibri*, in eighth place under the category *Narrativa italiana*, just above Antonio Tabucchi's short novel *Il filo dell'orizzonte* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1986). In the *Corriere della Sera*, *Danubio* made its entrance among the best-sellers at the beginning of December and by the end of that month it was classified second — but this time the category was *Saggistica*, and the one book selling more than Magris's was Enzo Biagi's inquest on the mafia *Il boss è solo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1986).

A comparison with marketing techniques and reviews relating to some of *Danubio*'s translations reveals significant differences. Both the English, the Spanish and the Czech translations, for instance, clearly present *Danubio* as a travel book, though each dust-jacket draws on preferred connections: the Spanish publisher, for instance, favours references to the 'tourisme éclairé' of Stendhal and Chateaubriand, while also accepting the suggestion of a Borgesian labyrinthine itinerary already proposed by the Italian version.¹² But the manipulation goes further than just claiming the travel label for Magris's book: the translations set out to transform the book accordingly. A whole textual apparatus appears around the body of the text: all three translations add a detailed map of the area covered by the journey, complete with any relevant place names; additionally, the English text, which is going to be the focus of this analysis, is also accompanied by an index of places and names, while the detailed (but not geographically obvious) list of chapter sub-headings is deleted. The British edition also acquires a completely new subtitle so that the book becomes *Danube: A Sentimental*

disloca sulla scia di altre non poche conversioni accademiche [...] Già da tempo se ne riconoscevano le avvisaglie. Non poche pagine di *Danubio* fuoriuscivano dalla saggistica per sconfinare nel racconto, nel genere del *Reisebilder*, diario di viaggio' (pp. 603-04). More recently, reviews of the adaptation of *Danubio* staged at the 1997 Mittelfest in Cividale confirm the interpretation of the book as 'romanzo-saggio' (Franco Quadri, 'Danubio, in scena il cuore d'Europa', *La Repubblica*, 21 July 1997, p. 33).

¹² See above, notes 1 and 2, for details of the Spanish and English editions used; Czech edn, *Dunaj*, trans. by Katerina Vinsová and Bohumír Klípa (Prague: Odeon, 1992); the references to 'tourisme éclairé' and to a labyrinthine itinerary are taken from the dust jacket of the Spanish text.

Journey from the Source to the Black Sea (the reference to Sterne clearly being used as a main selling point).¹³

Reviews quoted on the dust-jacket of the British edition stress the travel affiliation, as well as richness of details, erudition, historical, geographical and tourist interest.¹⁴ Next to John Banville's already quoted praises for the book and his just as strong praises for Patrick Creagh's translation, we find quotations from Ian Thomson's *Independent* review which states that '*Danube* is not simply a masterpiece of travel; it is an Odyssey'.¹⁵ And the dust-jacket selection even includes a translated extract from *Le Monde*, qualifying the book as a 'synthesis of history, geography, literature, political philosophy and intelligent tourism too'. It is interesting to note that the Triestine ex-centricity of the author — constantly stressed in Italy¹⁶ — is completely absent here: from the hegemonic centre of the English literary system an Italian book and author were possibly perceived as close enough to the Mitteleuropa and also marginal enough

¹³ Pellegrini notes the peculiarity of this British reception, comparing it with preferred readings suggested by critics in other countries. She remarks that 'in Inghilterra [...] si è teso a leggere Danubio come un diario di bordo, nella tradizione della letteratura di viaggio, e si è indicato il suo modello in Sterne' (*Epica sull'acqua*, p. 84). In the United States 'dopo la caduta della cortina di ferro, si [è] teso a dare soprattutto una lettura di carattere politico del libro' (p. 84). In France critics stressed mostly the autobiographical quality of the book, describing Magris as 'quasi un mistico dei nostri giorni, nervoso, laconico, alle prese con un "vagabondage initiatique", un autore eccentrico, condizionato dalla grande tradizione degli scrittori moralisti, un "Montaigne électrisé"' (p. 76). In Spain 'si è parlato soprattutto degli aspetti nichilistici e postmoderni' (p. 84); while in Germany 'dove *Danubio* ha avuto un'accoglienza larga ma spesso condizionata dal fatto che veniva letta prevalentemente come un'opera del germanista, vi si è visto prevalentemente un'eco del *Meister* goethiano' (p. 77), and critics mostly stressed '[gli] aspetti eruditi e saggistici di un libro che si è fatto fatica a definire romanzo' (p. 86).

¹⁴ It should be noted that though *Danubio* was written before the fall of the Berlin Wall, its English translation virtually coincided with it, and the reviews were written with an eye to the new Europe which was at the time rediscovering the significance of Mitteleuropa.

¹⁵ Ian Thomson, 'Last Waltz Along the Blue Danube', *Independent*, 1 July 1989, p. 32.

¹⁶ The ex-centric quality of Magris's identity is a constant theme of his reception in Italy. His most recent volume, *Microcosmi* (Milan: Garzanti, 1997) was described as 'il più italiano tra i suoi lavori' and Magris himself has been defined as 'il più mitteleuropeo tra i nostri scrittori, il più cosmopolita dei "provinciali"' (Simonetta Fiori, 'La lingua è la mia patria', *La Repubblica*, 14 June 1997, p. 41). In the same interview Magris declares: 'La mia sintassi è italiana: l'accoglienza dei miei libri nei paesi latini è stata assai più significativa che in Germania, nonostante qui abbia molte amicizie e conoscenze. Sicuramente i miei riferimenti culturali sono più tedeschi e centroeuropei che italiani [...]. Anche le mie categorie filosofiche sono più tedesche che italiane [...]. Ma se guardo il mare... [...] Se guardo il mare me ne impossesso in italiano: con le sue unità melodiche, le sue cadenze, la sua musica.' Asked by Fiori whether he agreed with the description of *Microcosmi* as the most Italian of his books, Magris replied: 'Per la verità, i miei libri li sento tutti italiani, incluso *Danubio*, forse *Microcosmi* è quello in cui ci sono più paesaggi, scenari, destini, incroci del nostro paese.'

to understand it, as implied in this quotation from the *Literary Review*: 'It has taken an Italian to interpret Central Europe and its identities to the rest of the world.'¹⁷

Examining some of the reviews in full highlights other relevant elements of the reception of *Danube* in Great Britain — the most conspicuous being the fact that all reviews appeared under the section 'Travel'. The piece in the *Observer*, 'River Waltz', was subtitled 'Christian Jennings finds a new travel classic'.¹⁸ The one in the *Sunday Times* is part of a 'Travel Book Special' which also includes a review by John Ardagh of Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1989). *Danube* (reviewed by Roger Clarke together with a Reverend's guide to Umbria and a restaurant critic's account of South America), does not, in fact, receive unconditional praise: Claudio Magris is described as 'an intellectual heavyweight' whose journey down the Danube 'is largely cerebral, jumping from one great stepping stone of obscure European literature to another'; furthermore we are warned that 'the book is often rather pretentious for the Anglo-Saxon palate', yet Clarke confesses to 'coming round to this odd synthesis of travel and philosophy, veined with poetic and touching images'.¹⁹ The same criticisms are couched, albeit with immediate reassurances, in Ian Thomson's *Independent* review: while noticing the relevance and topicality of the questions about Mitteleuropa raised by Magris, Thomson also warns the reader that the journey through the region 'inspires some weighty pronouncements [...] But fear not. *Danube* is a splendid book, beautifully translated by Patrick Creagh. [...] And it is not in the least academic; there is no stink, in its illuminating pages, of midnight oil'; and, should prospective readers need any further reassurance, 'Magris has a way of undercutting

¹⁷ All quotations are from the dust-jacket of the 1991 English edition mentioned above.

¹⁸ C. Jennings, 'River Waltz', *The Observer*, 20 August 1989, p. 39.

¹⁹ The 'Travel Books Special' includes John Ardagh, 'Joie de vivre and aches in Provence' and Roger Clarke, 'Mummies and Patriarchs' (*The Sunday Times*, 30 July 1989, pp. 8-9). The other books reviewed by Clarke are: James Bentley, *Umbria* (London: Aurum, 1989); Quentin Crewe, *Realms of Gold* (London: M. Joseph, 1989); Dan O'Brien, *The Rites of Autumn* (London: Collins, 1989); and Ronald Wright, *Time Among the Maya* (London: Bodley Head, 1989).

such pronouncements with irony'. In the realm of travel writing, then, erudition is a risk which might upset the expectations of the reader — and does sometimes upset the critic. Instead, 'irony', 'serendipitous details', a 'baggage of fads and quotations' and similar traits are perfectly welcome, as they turn *Danube* into 'some great eighteenth-century lumber room, piled high with diverting bric-à-brac', and the river voyage becomes 'wonderfully digressive', 'not only in its material but also in the meandering route which Magris chooses to take along the Danube'.²⁰ Put in these terms, *Danube* really sounds like the work of Laurence Sterne, and it is no surprise that Thomson should make the following remark:

Presumably by way of homage to Laurence Sterne's 1762 [sic] *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, Magris has subtitled his book 'A Sentimental Journey from the Source to the Black Sea'. Like Sterne, Magris prizes above all things the decencies, the simplicities of the human heart. ('Last Waltz Along the Blue Danube')

It seems then that British reviewers, picking up the reading suggested by the marketing of *Danube*, tried to subsume the book into the genre of travel literature as defined by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, its public and the corresponding horizon of expectations. The more effective this operation, the more enthusiastic the review — yet this was not an easy appropriation: *Danube* seemed to resist it, and consequently received some criticism.²¹

²⁰ Ian Thomson, 'Last Waltz Along the Blue Danube'.

²¹ This analysis is also validated by the only really negative review of *Danube*: G. M. Tamás, 'From Many Sources', *TLS*, 14-28 August 1989, p. 894. Tamás, who is Hungarian, refuses to read *Danube* according to the travel book paradigm. Instead, he sees the book as an 'elegant and urbane mixture of cultural history and reportage', and criticizes precisely that urbanity and elegance, which he fears will mislead the reader into a fictional vision of Eastern Europe. By reading the book in such a factual fashion, and allocating to himself, rather than to Magris, the role of the insider, Tamás ends up criticising *Danube* for not being something it was never meant to be: a faithful and accurate history of Eastern European countries. Pellegrini makes a similar observation when noting that in Austria as well as in many Eastern European countries, *Danubio*'s reception was mixed (though prevalently positive): 'In generale, si può osservare che proprio nei paesi direttamente toccati dal Danubio, e quindi implicati o implicabili nel libro, le reazioni sono state più diffidenti e ricche di malintesi: *Danubio* veniva visto soprattutto come un libro sul proprio mondo, rispetto al quale naturalmente venivano elencate lacune materiali' (*Epica sull'acqua*, p. 87).

Whatever the results of the reading, however, the fact that *Danube* (the English text) should be so clearly classified as 'travel writing' constitutes a significant shift, since that genre affiliation was only marginal (if at all clear) in the Italian context. Any attempt at explaining this shift, however, must not try to prove one reading right and the other wrong, a solution already pre-empted by the fact that Magris himself repeatedly and skilfully endorsed both versions.²² Rather, one can try to trace the reasons for the different readings back to the systemic constraints active in each culture, to the horizons of expectations governing the reception of each version of the text.

As illustrated above, the marketing and dominant reception of *Danube* in Great Britain take place within the horizon of expectations related to mainstream, contemporary English travel writing (plus a link to Sterne, which will be picked up later). The Italian reception is more complex, because no clear generic affiliation emerges, and the text is qualified as ambiguous, while mixed genre labels, such as 'saggio-romanzo', have to be coined for it. Furthermore, there is ample evidence of specific reluctance and hesitation in the face of the constant temptation — fuelled by the author himself — to identify the book as travel writing.

It can be argued that this phenomenon is the result of the absence of an established genre of travel writing in the Italian literary canon, which results in a tendency for travel books to be 'disguised' as something else (journalism, essays, and so on). The invisibility of the genre, and the resistance of the Italian literary canon against the recognition of the role it played in the Italian literary tradition, have been linked by Theodore Cachey to the territorial vacuum which for a long time characterized Italian literature due to the absence of an Italian nation. As a result, according to Cachey,

²² See the interview with Gabriella Ziani, quoted above. Magris made very similar remarks on *Danubio* in a paper given at the Italian Cultural Institute in Dublin on the occasion of the 1993 Conference of the Society for Italian Studies, which coincided with the publication of the English translation of his next novel, *Un altro mare*; the paper can now be read as Claudio Magris, 'A Different Sea', *Italian Studies*, 49 (1994), 125-31.

idealized notions of literature, geography and national identity have tended to dominate, imposing a preference for literariness and fictional re-creation over realism and description.²³ Yet once traditional critical assumptions are abandoned, it becomes clear that in Italy there is in fact a large audience for travel writing. And though travel sections in Italian bookshops tend to be filled with translations of foreign books, even for Italian texts the picture is not so grim. In fact, the marginal position of Italian travel writing and its relative freedom from generic expectations and constraints can be taken as an invitation to produce works of innovative, or even revolutionary character, in accordance with Deleuze and Guattari's definition of minor literature.²⁴ Significantly, this definition hinges on the concept of deterritorialization:

Une littérature mineure n'est pas celle d'une langue mineure, plutôt celle qu'une minorité fait dans une langue majeure. Mais le premier caractère est de toute façon que la langue y est affectée d'un fort coefficient de déterritorialisation. (p. 29)

It is at least a striking coincidence that Deleuze and Guattari should formulate their theory of minor literatures thinking of the example of the Jewish Kafka writing in the deterritorialized German of Mitteleuropean Prague, and that Kafka should be one of the favourite subjects of Claudio Magris the scholar, as well as one of the main presences in *Danubio*, a book which takes its initial move from the contrast between the pure, German Rhine and the multiethnic, deterritorialized, Danube.²⁵ Or that the French example of similar minor literature found by Deleuze and Guattari should be that same

²³ Cachey, 'An Italian Literary History of Travel', p. 56.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature mineure?', pp. 29-50. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of this concept.

²⁵ For an analysis of this aspect of *Danubio* see Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature*, p. 104. On the subject, Magris has written: '*Danubio* è una metafora della complessità, della contraddittoria pluristratificazione dell'identità contemporanea, di ogni identità, perché il Danubio è un fiume che non si identifica soltanto con un popolo, con una cultura, bensì scorre attraverso tanti paesi diversi, tanti popoli, nazioni, culture, lingue, tradizioni, frontiere, sistemi politici e sociali. Nel libro ci sono molti personaggi che non sanno esattamente a quale nazionalità appartengano, che sanno definirsi soltanto per negazione, che sanno soltanto dire ciò che essi non sono'; C. Magris, 'Danubio e post-Danubio', *Rivista di studi ungheresi*, 7 (1992), 21-32 (p. 23).

Celine who is portrayed by Magris as a nomadic presence in a Mitteleuropa devastated by war. Or that Magris himself, a German scholar born in Trieste, should write his book on Mitteleuropa in the deterritorialized Italian of his ex-centric, border city. Or, finally, that his Triestine (multiple) identity should be so influential in the reception of *Danubio*, a book itself perceived as ambiguous (thus deterritorialized from the canon) and possibly belonging to a marginal, minor genre such as Italian travel writing.

Magris himself speaks of Trieste, Triestine identity and Triestine literature in terms which are remindful of Deleuze and Guattari's pages:

Se Trieste è una frontiera, quest'ultima diviene, in alcune opere letterarie, un modo di vivere e di sentire, un struttura psicologica e poetica. La frontiera è una striscia che divide e collega, un taglio aspro come una ferita che stenta a rimarginarsi, una zona di nessuno, un territorio misto, i cui abitanti sentono spesso di non appartenere veramente ad alcuna patria ben definita o almeno di non appartenerele con quella ovvia certezza con la quale ci si identifica, di solito, col proprio paese. [...]

Ma la frontiera la quale separa e spesso rende nemiche le genti che si mescolano e si scontrano sulla sua linea invisibile, anche unisce quelle stesse genti, che si riconoscono talora affini e vicine in quel loro comune destino — che le grandi madrepatrie non riescono a capire — in quel loro sentimento segreto d'inappartenenza, in quell'incertezza e in quell'indefinibilità della loro identità.

Perciò dai luoghi di frontiera — non solo nazionale o linguistica, ma anche etnica, sociale, religiosa, culturale — è spesso nata una notevole ed incisiva letteratura, espressione di quella crisi e di quella ricerca dell'identità che segnano oggi il destino di ognuno e non certo soltanto di chi nasce o vive nelle terre di confine.²⁶

Today, 'Trieste [...] è nuovamente di moda, perché la sua assenza e la sua marginalità sono lo specchio di una condizione generale della nostra civiltà' (p. 208). And it is precisely this marginality which, together with an epigonic quality, confers Triestine

²⁶ Claudio Magris and Angelo Ara, *Trieste: Un'identità di frontiera*, pp. 192-93. David Spurr makes a similar point on the importance of frontiers while discussing the significance of the biographical connections of contemporary theorists such as Kristeva and Derrida with geographical areas which 'define the outer limits of Western European culture' (Bulgaria and Algeria, respectively). Spurr links such geographical connections with notions of hybridity and *metissage*, as well as with the 'sense that established forms of knowledge belong to a past epoch', coupled with the vision of 'a writing that would open itself to the realities of the other' (*The Rhetoric of Empire*, p. 196).

literature 'l'autentica grandezza di quella tradizione "minore" che nessuno Spirito del Mondo può reclutare per i suoi fini, che nessun progetto culturale può integrare nella sua razionalizzazione' (p. 8). Marginality also confers freedom, since 'quella tradizione patria è realmente ai margini, [...] e tale estraneità le conferisce quella minima ma reale autonomia, quella disarmata autenticità garantita dall'emarginazione' (pp. 8-9). For Magris, as for Deleuze and Guattari, 'la più grande letteratura è quella che esprime, con dolorosa e rigorosa consapevolezza, questa condizione di marginalità e di relitto, assunti a cifra della situazione dell'individuo nel mondo' (p. 206). And a minoritarian quality (often linked to the 'ingenuità epigonale' which can give literature 'un alto valore positivo di "anticorpo", o almeno di corpo marginale, di relitto, di elemento sorpassato e non integrabile in alcun grande sistema', p. 206) is a necessary condition of such greatness, since 'questa epica del marginale può nutrirsi [...] soltanto di un tessuto popolare, può essere vera solo se è e resta minore, consapevolmente estranea alla cultura ufficiale' (p. 199). Magris also explicitly links territorial and literary marginality with ambiguous generic choices and a taste for allusion and 'disguise'. In Trieste:

ci si trova in un "collage" in cui niente si è trasferito nel passato e nessuna ferita si è rimarginata nel tempo, in cui tutto è presente, aperto e acerbo, in cui tutto coesiste ed è contiguo [...].

Fuori, sul mare, il vento spinge via le nubi, increspa le onde [...] in un orizzonte terso, in una luce di nordica lontananza che sembra il fondo trasparente della vita stessa, la promessa di tutto ciò che ci manca. Ma dentro, nei caffè e nelle osterie, il tempo si è rappreso in grumi distinti e adiacenti; passare da un tavolo all'altro vuol dire uscire da un'epoca, attraverso un'invisibile porta temporale, ed entrare in un'altra. Quella sconnessione, così evidente, è ormai la sconnessione del mondo e dell'arte che la ritrae; forse per questo ci si sente così a casa, in questa città in cui un viaggiatore agli inizi del secolo diceva di sentirsi "in nessun luogo", nell'irrealtà, e forse per questo si prova un po' di disagio a sentirsi così a casa fra quegli sparpagliati ammenicoli del tempo.

Da quella sospensione nasce il desiderio o la necessità di scrivere, la scrittura saggistica e obliqua di chi si sente un passeggero clandestino nella storia. Chi si trova ai margini della vita scrive di qualcosa per alludere a qualche cosa d'altro, alla vita che gli balena fuggitiva e irreperibile, aggira e ciruisce con parole ironiche e struggenti quell'assenza che è il suo destino e affida quelle parole a una bottiglia,

perché non sa bene quale sia il pubblico per cui si scrive, quale sia il centro della sua periferia.²⁷

The fragmented, oblique quality of this kind of writing, and its feeling of belatedness, of 'coming after' and following in someone else's steps is characteristic of travel writing, especially in its modernist and postmodernist incarnations.²⁸ These same traits, however, also link travel writing to the essay,²⁹ and provide Italian critics, who hesitated to qualify *Danubio* as a travel book, with an alternative generic affiliation — 'romanzo-saggio' — capable of reconciling the many 'idiosyncrasies' of Magris's work.³⁰

²⁷ Claudio Magris, 'I luoghi della scrittura: Trieste', in *Itaca e oltre*, pp. 278-84 (p. 283).

²⁸ See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the image of 'following in someone else's steps'. On travel and belatedness see Porter, *Haunted Journeys* and Behdad, *Belated Travellers*.

²⁹ Stefano Tani is particularly explicit in associating the essay with postmodern concerns and with alternatives to 'traditional' narrative. Discussing the works of Claudio Magris and Alberto Cavallari, Tani writes: 'quelli di Magris e di Cavallari mi sembrano casi di conciliazione fra sentimento e storia, che coniugano un andamento meditativo-narrativo con una nuova riconosciuta esigenza documentaria, dove il documento è pazientemente ricostruzione di frammenti illuminati e completati dalla simpatia di chi quella storia l'ha voluta cercare e salvare. [...] Come si è visto con i casi di Magris e Cavallari, un fenomeno parallelo al diffondersi di forme di narrativa in qualche modo connesse alla storia è l'emergere di un nuovo tipo di scrittore, non più l'autore ispirato, il romanziere *tout court*, ma lo scrittore-critico (in parte da riferirsi ad una nuova ed agguerrita generazione di professori universitari), l'autore colto che sa coniugare saggismo e narrativa e sa creare un'opera che è intarsio e interpolazione di documenti d'archivio e di riflessioni personali, di fatti e di analisi, compendio di storia e d'invenzione. È la rivalsa di una precisa *expertise* e dell'abilità filologica sull'espansione sentimentale, il sigillo dell'esigenza di una nuova "professionalità" che trova ormai riscontro a più livelli; è anche un nuovo aspetto di quella coscienza postmoderna di essere epigoni, di non poter scrivere direttamente e di doversi appoggiare ad altri testi, che implica, come direbbe Eco, un citare "non innocente", un sapere usare con competenza e maestria l'assedio di una tradizione che si può anche irridere e manipolare, ma non ignorare' (*Il romanzo di ritorno*, pp. 88-90). Tani also directly quotes Magris (in his incarnation as a critic) when attempting to explain the particular appeal of scholarship and factual information for the readers of contemporary narrative: 'la componente di ricerca storica e documentaria rende la narrazione più plausibile, più equilibrata, mentre ormai il romanzo verosimile "tutta finzione" viene, come osserva Claudio Magris, percepito come kitsch, operazione eccessiva e un po' grottesca che ha come oggetto un lettore fin troppo disponibile a lasciarsi trasportare sulle proverbiali ali della fantasia per non destare sospetti di acritica credulità' (p. 73; the reference is to C. Magris, 'Dal nostro inviato nella vita', *Panorama*, 14 December 1986, p. 127). During a discussion held at University College London on February 24th 1998 Magris also asserted that he prefers to write about real figures and events since they are much more interesting than any 'fictions' he could dream up.

³⁰ It is significant that Paul Fussell, discussing the British literary system, should make exactly the opposite point: according to Fussell, 'a fact of modern publishing history is the virtual disappearance of the essay as a salable commodity', and contemporary travel writing is 'a device for getting published essays which, without the travel "menstruum" (as Coleridge would say), would appear too old-fashioned for generic credit, too reminiscent of Lamb and Stevenson and Chesterton' (*Abroad*, p. 204).

(ii) Translation and Literary Repertoires: From Sterne to Magris and Back

A consideration of the status and fortune of travel writing in Italy can contribute to clarify why Magris's text, with its mixture of fact and fiction, erudition and autobiography, authority and marginality, realism and 'literariness', was perceived as ambiguous in Italy; and why its recognition as travel literature had to wait for the translation of the book into a language such as English, where travel writing occupies a more prestigious position. But it remains to be seen how the conditions of production and the source-culture reception of a text like *Danubio* influence its choice for and treatment in translation, and whether such relationships are part of a wider pattern of transfer and interference between the source system (Italian) and the target system (English).

According to Itamar Even-Zohar, there are two relevant ways in which the system of translation is organized within the cultural polysystem: the principles according to which texts are selected for translation, and the use translations make of literary repertoires.³¹ As far as selection is concerned, it must be noted that *Danubio* is not the only example of 'Italian travel literature in disguise' to be selected for translation by English publishers: recent examples include Angelo Maria Ripellino's *Praga magica*,³² another book whose translation coincided with a marked generic shift in the direction of travel writing. Ripellino's book is a particularly fitting example since it bears a lot of similarities to *Danube*: both books deal with Mitteleuropa, both were written by academics with an expertise in the culture of the area, both are extremely erudite, rich in quotations and characterized by intertextual or even hypertextual

³¹ *Polysystem Studies*, p. 46.

³² Turin: Einaudi, 1973; 2nd edn 1991; English edition: *Magic Prague*, trans. by David Newton Marinelli, ed. by Michael Henry Heim (London: Macmillan, 1994); references are to the 1995 paperback edition of *Magic Prague* published by Picador.

tendencies (Ripellino goes as far as accurately footnoting every single reference). The similarities extend to the presentation and reception of the two works in Italy and England, including at least one shared reviewer: John Banville. Both books were read (or re-read, as in the case of *Praga magica*, which, written in 1973, was reprinted in Italy in 1991 and translated into English in 1994) in the aftermath of the events of 1989, which changed the perception of Eastern Europe in the West and opened its frontiers to mass tourism. Yet the short preface included in the 1991 Italian edition does not take the opportunity to advertise *Praga magica* as a possible guide to Prague, nor do the dust-jacket comments. Instead, and with clear echoes of *Danubio*'s reception, both highlight Ripellino's vast knowledge, his literary skills, his intimate feeling for the mystery of the places and people which inhabit his book, and the fascinating quality of his mixture of fiction and reality. The English translation, on the other hand, is first of all presented as a book which 'attempts to go beyond the tourist cliché of Prague' — and no move could be more typical of a travel book than an attempt to differentiate itself from guide-books by electing its audience among the travellers rather than the tourists.³³ The book contains acknowledgements to various people for help with editorial changes and with the location of relevant places on the detailed map of the city which has been added for the benefit of the British public. Footnotes have been moved from the bottom of the page to the back of the book, and a number of photographs of Prague and its artistic heritage have been inserted in the text. On the basis of such similarities of treatment, it seems clear that *Danubio* is not the only erudite text which, while not marketed as such in Italy, converted — or reverted — to the genre of travel writing when translated into English.

³³ The quotation is from the back cover. On the dialectics of travel and tourism see Buzard, *The Beaten Track* and Culler, 'The Semiotics of Tourism'.

As far as the traditions drawn upon by the English translation of *Danubio* are concerned, it has already been noted that of the many ghosts evoked by Magris — such as Kafka, Canetti, Musil, Celine, Stendhal, Heine, Goethe, Sterne, many of whom are capital figures in the European panorama of travel writing — the one strategically singled out by the English translation is Sterne. The choice may seem obvious, since he is the only English author in the list, and the association with *A Sentimental Journey* reinforces the desired assimilation of *Danube* to the travel genre.³⁴ Yet the complex lines which link Sterne to Italy (and Trieste) and Magris to Sterne, show that the strategy is far from being simple — and may in fact even present some risks.

The fortune of Sterne in Italy is strictly bound up with the name of Ugo Foscolo, one of the father-figures of national literature in Italian literary historiography, and yet a complex, ex-centric one. Born on the Greek island of Zakynthos in 1778, Foscolo first studied in Split and then moved to Venice — where his family came from. For his commitment to the idea of a united and independent Italy he ended up in exile, first in Switzerland and finally in England, where he died in poverty in 1827.³⁵ In typical Foscolo style, his relationship with England and the English language started in France, in 1804, with a double love affair: one with a woman, the other with a book. The book was Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), and if we are to believe Foscolo's words he decided to translate it into Italian as a reaction against the dreadful anonymous translation already available.³⁶ As his love-affair with Sterne's book developed, so did his anglophilia (to the point that recently Edoardo Sanguineti wrote that England for Foscolo represented the 'reagente ideale e

³⁴ On the influence of 'sentimental literature' on British travel writing see for instance M. L. Pratt, 'Scratches on the Face of the Country', pp. 131-33, and Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, pp. 228-33.

³⁵ Walter Binni has defined Foscolo as someone 'sradicato quanto a estrazione e collocazione nazionale (greco?, greco-veneto, greco-veneto-dalmata, veneziano ma della colonia greca e greco-dalmata?); in Walter Binni, *Ugo Foscolo: Storia e poesia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1982), p. 12.

³⁶ See Claudio Varese, *Foscolo: Sternismo, tempo e persona* (Ravenna: Longo, 1982), p. 21.

terminale'),³⁷ and his interest in translation. Foscolo was in fact one of the few Italian intellectuals of his period to be deeply interested in the theoretical aspects of translation and their practical implications. At the time the practice of literary translation in Italy was mostly dominated by the demand for popular novels which, given the very late development of the genre in Italy, were mainly translated and adapted from French and English. No standards or guarantees were given to nor followed by translators and publishers, and the result was that translations were of very mixed quality. At high-brow level, a few poets and writers were interested in translation and its role, especially with regard to the translation of classics such as Homer's poems.³⁸ Foscolo wrote an essay on the translation of the *Odyssey* in which he advocated the absolute difference of the language of translation and the need for total freedom in manipulating it and adjusting it to the original; and he also treated his translation of Sterne as a virtually life-long experiment. At the same time, with his translation of *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* and with his 'adaptation' of Goethe's *Werther* in *Ultime lettere di Iacopo Ortis* (1817), Foscolo contributed to the development and innovation of the Italian literary tradition, introducing to it two important models whose influence is still to be found in the twentieth century.³⁹

The double connection which through Foscolo leads to Goethe and Sterne is particularly significant: the traditional critical reading of Foscolo tends to oppose his

³⁷ Edoardo Sanguineti, 'Presentazione', in Ugo Foscolo, *Lettere dall'Inghilterra*, ed. by Edoardo Sanguineti (Milano: Mursia, 1978), pp. 5-8 (p. 6).

³⁸ See Luca Toschi, 'Forme e temi del romanzo settecentesco', in F. Brioschi and C. di Girolamo, eds, *Manuale di letteratura italiana*, pp. 387-96; and, in the same volume, Nicola Merola, 'Il codice neoclassico e Foscolo', pp. 271-99.

³⁹ On Foscolo's attitude to translation see Claudio Varese, *Foscolo: Sternismo, tempo e persona*, p. 29. The first draft of *Viaggio sentimentale* dated from 1805-7; Foscolo undertook a complete rewriting in 1812 and then another between 1812 and 1813; after the publication of his translation in 1813 he kept revising and annotating the text until his death. For further details see Giuseppe Sertoli, 'Nota sulla traduzione del Foscolo', in Laurence Sterne, *Viaggio sentimentale*, trans. by Ugo Foscolo, ed. by Giuseppe Sertoli, Oscar Classici, 220 (Milan: Mondadori, 1991), pp. xl-xlv. On the relationship between *Ultime lettere di Iacopo Ortis* and *Werther* see Walter Binni, *Ugo Foscolo: Storia e poesia* and its excellent bibliography. Finally, on the influence of Foscolo on contemporary Italian literature see Oreste Macrì, *Il Foscolo negli scrittori italiani del novecento* (Ravenna: Longo, 1980).

two literary *personae* (Didimo Chierico, the supposed translator of Sterne, and Iacopo Ortis, the Werther-like figure of *Ultime lettere*), identifying the first with the ironic and the second with the passionately romantic side of the author. Claudio Magris, on the other hand has pointed out that Goethe admired Sterne and understood his ability to capture 'l'universale nei suoi dettagli apparentemente minimi e svagati, nelle chiacchiere d'osteria non certo meno significative dei discorsi alle accademie'.⁴⁰ For Magris then, there is no opposition between Sterne and Goethe, but rather a line passing between the two (though, as far as travel writing is concerned, he soon admits his own preference for Sterne). The same attitude was in fact adopted by Foscolo, who translated and adapted a chapter of *Tristram Shandy*, including it in his *Ultime lettere di Iacopo Ortis*.⁴¹

Foscolo's translation strategies in his version of *A Sentimental Journey* are worthy of attention: the translator recognized the innovative and even idiosyncratic nature of the source text, and responded to it with a highly experimental translation which he offered to the reader as the least literal and the least arbitrary he could manage.⁴² To put it in contemporary Translation Studies terms, Foscolo was far from being invisible: not only did he consciously choose a text which was marginal, non-canonical, within the scope of the target culture, but he was also aware of its marginality within the canon of the source culture; besides, he decided to adopt 'foreignizing', non-

⁴⁰ Claudio Magris, 'Goethe in Italia: viaggio o fuga? Bicentenario di un capolavoro', *Corriere della Sera*, 3 December 1986, p. 3.

⁴¹ See Varese, *Foscolo: Sternismo, tempo e persona*, pp. 11-12.

⁴² In his short preface to the text (which he signs as Didimo Chierico, the imaginary translator he has adopted as a *persona*), Foscolo describes Sterne's style in the following words: 'mentre le sue immaginazioni prorompono tutte ad un tempo discordi e inquietissime, accennando più che non dicono, ed usurpando frasi, voci ed ortografia, egli sa nondimeno ordinarle con l'apparente semplicità di certo stile apostolico e riposato'; see Didimo Chierico, 'A' lettori salute', in the already quoted Oscar Classici edition, p. 3. Foscolo initially intended to carry out a far more radical rewriting of Sterne's work: he thought of publishing the book in four columns: English, Italian, French and a series of annotations supposedly written by an Irishman, Nathaniel Cookman (another of Foscolo's *personae*), supposed to be travelling through France in the same period when Foscolo was living there and starting his translation. The idea was then abandoned and the *persona* of Didimo Chierico replaced that of the Irishman.

fluent strategies in his translation, and ended up experimenting with archaism, idiomatic collocations, set phrases, biblical overtones, shifts from high to low register. If his intention in doing so was to prove that the Italian language was flexible enough to render the prose of an author as 'bizarre, subtle, limpid and concise as Sterne, the result of his strategies is that in Italy *Viaggio sentimentale* is, to this day, considered both by popular audiences and the critical profession more as Foscolo's than Sterne's work. Introductions to the many editions of the text tend to devote at least as much attention to Foscolo and the genesis of his translation as they do to Sterne and the writing of his book, and all other translations have failed to even shake Foscolo's monopoly on this Sternian text.⁴³

It is through this link with Foscolo that the history of Italian literary humour has found in Sterne one of its most inspiring lines of development; one which, according to Oreste Macrí includes twentieth-century authors such as Pirandello and Svevo.⁴⁴ Svevo is also the next link in this important network of influences and interferences which will eventually lead back to *Danubio*. The Triestine Svevo, of Mitteleuropean formation and a good friend of Joyce, wrote an unfinished short novel (or long short-story) entitled 'Corto viaggio sentimentale'.⁴⁵ The reference to Sterne is not only in the title, but also in numerous thematic and stylistic characteristics of the text: from the frequent trips to London made by the protagonist in his youth, to the subdivision of the text into chapters

⁴³ On Foscolo's intentions in translating Sterne see Varese, *Foscolo: Sternismo, tempo e persona*, pp. 21-22. Giulio Caprin's introductory essay to his edition of *Viaggio sentimentale* (Milan: Mondadori, 1952), completely devoted to the 'traduttore glorioso' and his painstaking work, is an extreme case of the critical bias in favour of Foscolo (pp. 7-12). Foscolo himself wrote that *Viaggio sentimentale* was 'un libretto mezzo mio e mezzo di Sterne' (quoted in Caprin's introduction, p. 11), and Giuseppe Sertoli has recently stated that 'dal 1813 a oggi intere generazioni di italiani, leggendo [*A Sentimental Journey*] nella traduzione di Foscolo, si sono abituati a considerarlo — complice anche la scuola — opera più sua che di Sterne'; G. Sertoli, 'Cimentarsi col Foscolo', *L'indice dei libri del mese*, 8.9 (November 1991), 18. Sertoli was reviewing a new translation of Sterne's book by Giancarlo Mazzacurati (Naples: Cronopio, 1991).

⁴⁴ *Il Foscolo negli scrittori italiani del novecento*, pp. 39-42

⁴⁵ Now in *Corto viaggio sentimentale e altri racconti inediti* (Milan: Mondadori, 1966), pp. 17-95; English translation 'Short Sentimental Journey, in *Short Sentimental Journey and Other Stories*, trans. by Beryl De Zoete, L. Collison-Morley and Ben Johnson (London: Secker & Warburg, 1967), pp. 203-300.

or scenes, each linked to a geographical location; from the use of humour to that of an interior narrative technique and time; from the number of portraits contained in the pages to the unfinished nature of the book. It is interesting to note that Svevo, 'an Austrian Jew, brought up speaking Triestine dialect, and partly educated in Germany', was for a long time unrecognized by the Italian literary establishment, which criticized his unstylish language and failed to appreciate the innovative quality of his works, now often linked to Joyce, Proust and the whole development of the twentieth-century novel.⁴⁶

Svevo's links with Magris are, in turn, not just biographical and geographical: besides Trieste and Mitteleuropa they share an interest in Sterne and in a not-so-canonical vision of English culture; and also a passion for humour, irony and digression, as well as masked autobiography.⁴⁷ All these are elements which can be traced back to Sterne (though not exclusively to him) via Svevo, via Foscolo and his translation of *A Sentimental Journey*, via the previous bad translation which enraged Foscolo, and so on. All are elements which also resurface in the English reception of *Danube* and influence, positively or negatively, the judgement passed on that book.

The history of the British reception of *Danube* and of its Sternian affiliation is thus tied up with a whole narrative made of translations and border crossings (of national borders, genre borders...), which moves along the margins, the ex-centric texts, the minor masterpieces of two traditions. And if the perspective is widened to include other translations, other readings of Magris's book, it is possible to see how in *Danube* Western European, Mitteleuropean and Italian culture meet on a margin through a

⁴⁶ The quotation on Svevo's identity is from Brian Moloney 'A Sentimental Ulysses: Sterne, James Joyce and Italo Svevo's "Corto viaggio sentimentale"', in *Literature and Travel*, ed. by Michael Hanne, pp. 111-21 (p. 111); the article offers an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Sterne's and Svevo's texts.

⁴⁷ Svevo is, for instance, the first figure mentioned in Magris's essay collection *Itaca e oltre* (pp. 5-6), and his mixture of irony and disillusionment set the tone for the whole book.

crossbreeding of literary traditions produced by an ex-centric Italian, Mitteleuropean, Western European.

It is not surprising, then, that when the English system — which does assign a canonical (though not central) position to travel literature — attempted to domesticate the translation of *Danubio*, to reshape the text according to its own rules, this transfer did not work so smoothly and some critics registered what can be termed resistance on the part of the text. In fact the clearest clue to the nature and origin of that resistance can be found precisely in the association with Sterne — central as it may have been to the marketing of the British version. For all its fame, *A Sentimental Journey* is not an obviously canonical text, and Sterne's writing is far from being the accepted standard of literary discourse in the English language. So much so, in fact, that Lawrence Venuti has recently mentioned him as the antidote to the realist discourse and plain style which have dominated the English literary tradition since the eighteenth century.⁴⁸ In fact, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, with its idiosyncratic characteristics, is possibly more appropriate as an emblem of Italian travel literature, constantly marginalized and struggling to assert itself between fact and fiction, literariness and literality. The domesticating strategy adopted to market the English version of *Danubio*, then, partly backfired — and the powerful marginality of the original resurfaced enlisting the help of the target culture's own minor literature.

(iii) Translation Strategies in *Danube*

The links just drawn along the line that goes from Sterne to Foscolo, Svevo and Magris open up the possibility of exploding the apparently simple domestication of *Danubio* by

⁴⁸ See Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 5-6.

the English canon and its preferred brand of travel writing. The reference to Sterne is a reference to an alternative, experimental and discontinuous, discourse which is clearly picked up in *Danubio*, and which, in return, might invite the English translator to adopt something similar to Sterne's opacity and multiple discourses. This section examines Patrick Creagh's translation, aiming to carry out a 'symptomatic reading' of it, that is to look for discontinuities between source and target text capable of highlighting the strategies which inform the translation, with the aim of historicizing, rather than judging, its outcomes.⁴⁹

It is in fact possible to notice some regularities in the discontinuities encountered between the Italian and the English texts.⁵⁰ One of the most evident areas of difference is the treatment of polylinguism, which in *Danubio* includes instances of many modern European languages, as well as Latin, and Triestine dialect. This polylinguism is one of the most evident traces of the intertextuality of the work, of the abundance of voices and quotations which mark it as a polyphonic text.⁵¹ Intertextuality is a characteristic of most travel writing, and especially of its contemporary variety, where, by summoning the figure and voice of predecessors, the traveller/writer can both validate his or her own experience and communicate a feeling of epigonic 'belatedness'.⁵² In Magris's book both of these functions are particularly evident. Magris has described the traveller/narrator of *Danubio* as 'un archeologo della realtà', stressing the importance (but also the desperate futility) of detailed and even idiosyncratic knowledge for any attempt to keep the chaos of reality under control:

⁴⁹ For this terminology see Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp. 24-25 and pp. 37-38, and also Chapter 2 above.

⁵⁰ Unless otherwise specified page references will be to the Italian and English editions respectively, as mentioned in note 1.

⁵¹ Ernestina Pellegrini notices the intertextual and polyphonic character of *Danubio*, remarking that 'questo libro di viaggi [...] è anche un compendio e una *summa* della varia letteratura di viaggio, e il suo protagonista è di volta in volta un po' la controfigura e l'eco di coloro che lo hanno preceduto e nutrito' (*Epica sull'acqua*, p. 72).

⁵² See Chapter 3 for a discussion of these issues.

il narratore che viaggia è anche un maniaco intellettuale, che ha la testa e le tasche piene di grottesche citazioni culturali, con le quali cerca di fare ordine nel caos di controllare e dominare le cose, di difendersi dai mutamenti della vita e della storia con dei castelli di carta, con delle barricate di erudizione che la vita fa presto a travolgere e disperdere. Come ogni appassionata pedanteria, anche questa può essere tragicomica.⁵³

There is a sense of postmodern pastiche and Bakhtinian heteroglossia, as well as Sternian 'sentiment' and sympathy, in Magris's use of quotations, of multiple languages and voices. As noted by Mary Louise Pratt with respect to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century 'sentimental' travel literature, this kind of self-conscious polyphony easily becomes ironic (or even parodic), and favours a multiple split of the subject embodied in the traveller/narrator.⁵⁴ And in fact Magris has explicitly spoken of adopting a composite style, and has described *Danubio* as 'a book of many voices and many styles, many planes of narration, many levels, since it is a chorus of many different stories, which require different voices, which flow into that of the "I" which journeys and narrates.'⁵⁵

In the English translation of *Danubio*, the polylinguism of the text tends to be played down. Latin is deleted when perceived as erudite, but maintained when the expression is either common in contemporary English usage or linked with factual information, such as bibliographical or topographical details: so '*deesse*' and '*officium*' (p. 90 and p. 79) disappear, while '*alter ego*' (p. 90 and p. 79) is kept and '*humus*' even

⁵³ Magris, 'Danubio e post-Danubio', p. 25 and p. 27. In the opening pages of *Danubio*, this attempt to control reality through erudition is portrayed in an image which significantly links travel and translation (both in their literal and figurative senses) through the common etymological root denoting transportation and displacement, with its inevitable corollary of loss and gain: 'Fra un viaggio e l'altro, tornati a casa, si cerca di stendere le gonfie cartelle di appunti sulla piana superficie della carta, di trasferire plichi, bloc-notes, dépliants e cataloghi su fogli battuti a macchina. Letteratura come trasloco; qualcosa, come in ogni trasloco, va perso e qualcosa salta fuori da ripostigli dimenticati' (p. 15).

⁵⁴ Pratt, 'Scratches on the Face of the Country', p. 132.

⁵⁵ Magris, 'A different sea', p. 131. On this subject, Pellegrini points out that 'l'io negato del racconto è miracolosamente la garanzia dell'insorgenza compatta delle miriadi di cose descritte e narrate', and adds 'per questo alcuni recensori hanno potuto, con apparente contraddizione, parlare di un libro corale e di un libro-monologo' (*Epica sull'acqua*, p. 53).

loses the italics (p. 38 and p. 37); furthermore, Marsili's '*Opus Danubiale*' (p. 186 and p. 159) and Linnaeus's '*Systema Naturae*' (p. 187 and p. 160) remain unchanged, as do '*Raetia secunda*' and '*Germania superior*' (p. 113 and p. 97). In other cases the Latin expression is kept, but an English paraphrase is added: so 'il fiume "bisnominis", come lo chiamava Ovidio' (p. 14) becomes 'the river, which Ovid called "bisnominis or double-named"' (p. 18). A similar strategy seems to govern the treatment of modern foreign languages: where set phrases and quotations are deemed easily recognizable by an English audience ('*esprit de géométrie*', p. 109 and p. 95) they are maintained, or at times even substituted for the Italian translation given in the source text ('battello ebbro', p. 15 becomes '*bateau ivre*', p. 18); elsewhere English translations are given ('Mes accusateurs sont tous des employés — moi, non', p. 59; 'My accusers are all on a pay-roll; I'm not', p. 54). Triestine dialect, however, is systematically deleted and substituted with standard English; this deletion is particularly significant since it confirms the trend to ignore the Triestine quality of the text, its ex-centricity and marginality with respect to Italian culture, already remarked when discussing English reviews. Other translations have found different solutions to the problems posed by dialect: for instance, the final quotation from Biagio Marin's vernacular poem ('fa che la morte mia, Signor [...] la sia comò'l scôre de un fiume in t'el mar grandò', p. 474) is left untranslated in the Spanish volume, with the addition of a version in standard Spanish given in footnote; the Czech translator, instead, gives both standard translation and original, in this order, in the body of the text.⁵⁶

A second area of discontinuity between the Italian and the English versions of Magris's book refers to lexical and syntactical complexity: simplification and normalization, frequent in most Italian-English translations, appear to concentrate, in the

⁵⁶ *El Danubio*, p. 370; *Dunaj*, p. 412.

specific case of *Danubio*, in areas of 'poetic' and erudite use of language; this may amount to an attempt to play down the perceived pretentiousness of the source text — which, however, still received criticism in some reviews.⁵⁷ The type of lexical changes involved can be observed in the following passages, with the English translation omitting both scientific terminology and a classical reference:

Se si va sulle rive di un fiume in luoghi e in momenti diversi, puntando sempre il dito verso l'acqua e dicendo ogni volta 'Danubio' — il logico Quine, cui è dovuta questa teoria della definizione ostensiva e dei ripetuti atti di ostensione, portava invero a tal esempio il Caystro — si perviene all'identità del Danubio. (p. 22)⁵⁸

If one goes to the banks of a river at different places and at different times, pointing one's finger at the water each time and saying 'Danube' — we owe this theory of definition by demonstration to the logician Quine — we eventually arrive at the identity of the Danube. (p. 24)

The paragraph immediately following the one just quoted provides a good example of syntactical changes:

Ma chi alimenta la grondaia, quale nascosta e inostensibile divinità fluviale? È qui che la relazione fa il suo capitombolo, perché lo scienziato cede a un approssimato pettegolo, che riporta dicerie altrui. Egli riferisce che Maria Giuditta, giunta per prima con le sue lunghe gambe all'altezza della casa e affacciata sulla finestra al pianterreno, ha interrogato la vecchia e burbera padrona, dalla quale ha appreso come l'acqua arrivi alla grondaia da un lavandino, che si riempie in continuazione per via di un rubinetto che nessuna riesce a chiudere, collegato a "un tubo di piombo, vecchio forse come la casa, il quale va a perdersi chissà dove". (p. 23)

But who supplies the gutter? What invisible fluvial divinity? It is at this point that the report takes a tumble, because the scientist yields to a gossipy approximation: he makes use of hearsay. Maria Giuditta, he tells us, with her long legs, was the first to reach the house at the top. She looked in at a window on the ground floor and questioned the grumpy old lady of the house. From her she learnt

⁵⁷ See especially the *Sunday Times* and *TLS* reviews. An in-depth analysis of translation strategies concerning syntax and word order in Patrick Creagh's version can be found in Federica Scarpa, 'Shifts of Grammar from Italian to English in the Translation of *Danubio*', in Avirovic and Dodds, eds, *Umberto Eco, Claudio Magris*, pp. 257-70.

⁵⁸ For the reference to the river Cayster see Ovid, *Tristia*, V, I, II.

that the water reaches the gutter from a basin and that this basin is constantly full because of a tap that no one ever succeeds in turning off; and that this is in turn connected to a "a lead pipe, which may well be as old as the house, and which ends up God knows where". (p. 24)

In the translation, the first sentence is split into two separate questions, the second is simplified by using a colon to avoid a relative clause, and the third is repeatedly cut by punctuation, thus replacing embedded sentences and relative clauses with explicit statements.

The English translation is also revealing in its treatment of irony: this is often played down, except in clearly marked passages such as the first and last sections of the book. The opening pages, are, in both versions, a masterpiece of Sternian humour with the long academic debate on which might be the real and true source of the Danube resolved, in the passage just quoted, by the possible (though not certain) discovery that the river springs from a tap — or maybe a gutter. The closing section contrasts the pathos of the arrival at the final destination of the trip with an ironic portrait of the reality surrounding it:

Il Danubio, debitamente incanalato, sfocia nella zona portuale riservata agli addetti ai lavori, si perde in mare sotto la sorveglianza della Capitaneria. L'accesso alla fine esige il permesso, il lasciapassare, ma i controllori sono gente di mondo, non capiscono bene cosa voglia lo straniero ma capiscono che è inoffensivo e gli consentono di fare un giro e di dare un'occhiata al niente che c'è da vedere, un canale che fluisce in mare in una cornice di navi, argani, travi, e mucchi di casse sui moli, timbri su pacchi postali, visti di sdoganamento. (p. 473)

The Danube properly channelled, reaches the sea in the harbour area reserved for dock personnel, and loses itself in the sea under the surveillance of the Harbour Master. To get to the end one requires a pass, but the controllers are men of the world: they don't really understand what this foreigner wants, but they see that he is inoffensive, and allow him to take a turn around and see the nothing there is to see, a canal running into the sea in a setting of ships, winches, beams, crates piled-up on jetties, rubber stamps on packages, certificates of Customs clearance. (pp. 400-01)

The mastery with which Creagh manages to convey the tone of such passages suggests that in cases where the ironic tone has been dropped or diluted the explanation might be found in the strategy adopted (whether consciously or unconsciously), rather than in a translation failure.

The treatment of polylinguism and irony, when considered together, seem to indicate the tendency towards a reduction of the multiple, dialogic voices of the source text in the direction of unity. This coincides with the general impression of fluency and transparency which the translation strives to achieve. Such a reading is also confirmed by the fact that all British reviews of the translation are highly positive, including those by critics who found faults with the book as a whole. Any negative comments on the language and style, in fact, tend to blame the 'continental' qualities of the author, not the very appropriately English translation.⁵⁹ However, Creagh only partly smooths out the 'difficult' nature of the text, preserving enough of its complexity to stimulate (or irritate) the British reader.

(iv) 'Freeing' the Text

Traces of the generic shift of the English version of *Danubio* towards the tradition of English-language travel writing can be found in the marketing, the reception and the translation strategies concerning the book. These areas are all influenced by patronage and poetics, that is by the authority of the 'professionals' of literature, by the economic interests dictating marketing choices, and by the dominant horizons of expectations. *Danubio* and its translation, then, would seem to provide a straightforward example of the hypotheses set out by Polysystems Theory, according to which the selection of texts

⁵⁹ This is the case. for instance in Ian Thomson's review.

to be translated into a hegemonic culture — such as the English is, today, with respect to the Italian — is done according to its own canon, and the translation strategies adopted are those dictated by existing target culture models.⁶⁰

Yet if we reverse the perspective and look back at the fortune of the book in the source culture from the vantage point offered by its target-culture reception, the case of Magris's *Danubio* becomes far more intriguing, and we notice the recognition through translation of the innovative nature of the source text with respect to Italian culture, where it could not find its place in a canonized genre and remained a successful one-off event, essentially ambiguous and marginal — a travel book in disguise.

This reversal of perspective is highly significant from a methodological point of view: a target-oriented approach to translation studies is not necessarily limited to observations on the target culture and the function played in it by translations. By comparing translation strategies and reception in source and target cultures we can cast light on the source culture and literary system too; and, more importantly, the comparison can enlighten us on the relationship between cultures and systems, overcoming rigid hierarchical models such as those proposed by Even-Zohar and polysystem theory.

The movement which leads from source to target and then from target back to source, and so on, tracing the network of reciprocal interferences, has one more insight to offer on *Danubio* and *Danube*. The English canon, with its domesticating strategies, actually favoured the recognition of a genre constantly marginalized in the Italian tradition (but all the more interesting precisely because minor and revolutionary); by the same process, this marginal text was reinscribed (in a rather more central position) within the English canon, thanks to a fluent translation strategy which tended to smooth

⁶⁰ See Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, pp. 46-47 and p. 51.

out its difficulties. According to Even-Zohar's model of the hierarchical structure of the literary polysystem, marginality is a highly undesirable condition for a text, yet it seems to have much in common with what Deleuze and Guattari have defined as the highly desirable status of minor literature.⁶¹ Following Deleuze and Guattari, it can be argued that it was precisely that ambiguous, unregulated condition, together with his own ex-centric position, which allowed Magris to create such a complex text as *Danubio*. It is at least tempting, then, to explain *Danubio*'s international success with its deterritorialization and the subsequent ability to play with the expectations of different audiences and the poetics of different literary traditions. The 'international' quality noted by Banville in his review of the book could stem from that ambiguity and the multiplicity of references it allows for. On the other hand, though, the absence of a strictly codified travel genre in the Italian tradition paradoxically allowed Magris — and his deterritorialized, minor literature, produced by a very authoritative yet consciously ex-centric member of the Italian cultural establishment — far greater freedom of discourse than could be enjoyed by Creagh, who had to deal with the strong fluency requirements of the English system. Yet, the Sterne connection was there to play its ambiguous role, and even a fluent translation strategy could not totally smooth over the opacity and dialogism of Magris's truly international and ex-centric book.

⁶¹ See Even Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*, p.19 and p. 46; and Deleuze and Guattari, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature mineure?'.

CONCLUSIONS

The readings of a series of Italian texts and their English-language translations carried out in the last four chapters confirm the value of a comparative strategy which, by analysing the relationship between original and translation, aims to highlight the occurrence of functional and generic shifts and to reveal some of the systemic constraints affecting the production, marketing and reception of works of literature in both the source and the target culture.

In all the cases analysed, the translations operated a reinscription of the Italian originals within the horizons of expectation of a different public and the generic conventions of a different literary system. Thus travel accounts such as those by Tucci or Dainelli, which had their origins in scientific enterprises and national myth-making, were re-written so as to accommodate the ideology of empire or the ethos of adventure. Works which were perceived as 'unwriterly' and 'journalistic' by Italian commentators, such as the books of Oriana Fallaci, found a new critical collocation (and an additional mass public) when marketed in the United States as the Italian response to American 'faction'. The highly stylized and consciously literary work of Italo Calvino became an icon of (post)modern life when *Invisible Cities* was read by British and American audiences, and partially re-contextualized among contemporary popular culture. And such a composite, learned, and hybrid book as Claudio Magris's *Danubio* could be presented as an 'alternative guide' to Mitteleuropa for a British public which was also encouraged to read it as a modern version of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*.

All of these re-writings were accompanied and assisted by shifts in the generic affiliation of the source texts. Independently of their high- or low-brow associations, their literary or non-literary status, or the prestige of their authors, the Italian works in question were at least partly re-located within the area occupied by travel writing in the Anglo-American literary system. Translation strategies at both micro- and macro-textual level, as well as the marketing and reception of the resulting English texts, confirm the presence of this affiliation, which was however absent — or, at most, marginal — from the production and reception circumstances of the Italian originals.

Thus translation appears to 'produce' a body of Italian travel literature, or at least an image of it, for the benefit and consumption of a foreign audience: Americans can enjoy the passionate reportages of a 'fiery Italian woman'; British readers can gain 'pleasurable instruction' from the diaries of far-travelling Italian explorers, whose international credentials make them at once sufficiently familiar and intriguingly different; and both audiences can marvel at the fact that 'it took an Italian' to construct a suitably complex representation of contemporary Eastern Europe — or of the contemporary experience of travel, Self and Otherness.

Such findings might encourage two kinds of generalizing conclusions. On the one hand it might be tempting to infer, retrospectively, the actual existence of a specifically Italian tradition of travel writing, and to attempt the construction of both a canon and an exhaustive description of the genre. Such a tradition would have to be comparable to those of Britain, Spain, and other Western nations, though its peculiar development and characteristics would be explained through references to specific constraints affecting Italian literature and culture both before and after the process of national unification. This

kind of reasoning, however, does not overcome most of the impasses encountered so far by those critics who have attempted to explain the fortunes (or failures) of Italian travel writing by approaching the problem in terms of national literature, and by adopting a restricted, non-comparative perspective. It is along these lines, for instance, that one can read recent attempts to identify a highly literary current among Italian works devoted to travel, such as Monica Farnetti's 1992 monograph *Reportages*. Ultimately, operations of this sort are unproductive, since they do not resolve a number of stale dichotomies (such as those opposing 'literature' to 'journalism', or 'fact' to 'fiction') which, at least in Italy, have marred the debate about travel writing throughout the present century, and have usually confined it to questions of merit relating to individual texts and authors. Furthermore, attempts to establish a specifically Italian tradition of travel literature appear to endorse a restrictive and prescriptive notion of genre which, as illustrated in Chapter 2, is refuted by most contemporary theorists and historians of both travel writing in particular, and literary systems in general. To say that a large amount of travel writing has been and is produced in Italy, but has so far remained 'invisible', is not to claim that a specific, codified genre exists and is simply awaiting discovery. The fact that Italian travel writing should be 'hidden' by critical categories and marketing strategies which tend either to ignore such works or to classify them under different labels, is in itself a statement of the absence of a relevant horizon of expectation — that is, of an established genre — in the Italian literary panorama. Any attempt to discard such factual circumstances and produce an exhaustive description of the formal and conceptual characteristics of a supposedly specific Italian travel writing, would be irreconcilable with the notion of genre as a functional category, based on readers' expectations and historically determined, conventional groupings of texts, adopted in the

present study. Additionally, the search for neat boundaries separating different genres (that is for inclusion and exclusion criteria), or for exemplary works positioned at the core of the tradition (that is for rules concerning the relative saliency of different generic traits), also contradicts the characterization of travel writing as an essentially hybrid form which emerges, almost unanimously, from all recent studies of the area. Finally, by focusing the analysis on intrinsic qualities of the works under examination, a prescriptive approach to genre shifts the attention away from the cultural functions of travel writing and back towards self-generated (and probably unsolvable) arguments concerning the correctness of each generic affiliation, irrespectively of the effective collocation found by a text in the cultural and literary system which receives it. Critical practice may then become detached from historical reality, and engage in increasingly irrelevant displays of specialist knowledge and sectorial authority.

A second line of argument — still based on the observation that, notwithstanding the consistent absence of an equivalent grouping within the Italian literary and critical tradition, a body of Italian travel writing appears to have been produced, through translation, for foreign consumption — would lead to conclude that what the present study demonstrates is simply the 'unfaithfulness' of translation. It might be argued that the reinscription within the travel genre of Italian texts which either originated outside strict generic boundaries, or found their first collocation under other labels and were received according to other criteria, constitutes a mystifying betrayal of the original, and also contributes to the production of a distorted image of the Italian literary system and, by default, of the culture it represents. Translation would then be guilty of unfaithfulness not only at a textual, but also at a systemic and cultural level. It would help to create, and

subsequently sustain, images and products which bear only partial resemblance to the ones from which they derive. And it would also deprive the originals of their intrinsic value, replacing them with 'fakes', whose character would be more often influenced by the commercial or ideological requirements of the target system than by any attempt at effective intercultural communication.¹ This type of argumentation is proving remarkably resilient, and, after centuries of debate, the issue of faithfulness continues to return to haunt discussions about the merits and functions of translation, both among scholars, practitioners, and non-specialists.² Yet, to conclude that the generic shifts observed in the case studies presented in the previous chapters are simply the result of the inevitable distortions involved in processes of translation would be doubly misleading. By adhering to intuitive notions of faithfulness, such a conclusion would disregard much of the contemporary debate on representation, textuality and intercultural communication. The contradictory nature of such a stance becomes particularly evident if we consider that, as illustrated in detail in Chapter 3, precisely issues of textuality, representation and intercultural communication lie at the core of both travel writing and translation, and provide a substantial link between the two concepts. Like translation, travel writing is constantly tempted to embrace the myth of faithfulness. Yet in both cases any attempt to

¹ Assumptions of this kind are a recurring theme, for instance, among the contributors to *The Italian Book in America/Il libro italiano in America*, edited by O. Munafò, many of whom seem to fall into a vicious circle by blaming the paucity of translations from Italian into English on a distorted image of Italian culture, while at the same time implying that translations necessarily distort the representation of the source culture imbedded in the original text, and thus contribute to the formation of stereotypes and other forms of intercultural 'misinformation'; see for instance Furio Colombo's remarks on the uses and pitfalls of translation (pp. 19-29).

² It is often through more or less hidden references to faithfulness that value judgements, in particular, are reintroduced in apparently value-free argumentations concerning the functions of translation. And although intuitive notions of faithfulness as 'literality' may have been abandoned in most discussions devoted to the linguistic features of source and target texts, no such agreement is to be found when it comes to cultural representations and the ideological implications of translated texts. Lawrence Venuti's defence of foreignizing translations, for instance, can be read as a call for faithfulness, seen as a form of resistance against the appropriative tendencies of hegemonic cultures, currently best represented by the United States; see L. Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* and 'Translation and the Formation of Cultural Identities'.

achieve this chimerical goal is doomed to failure, just as any evaluation of a travel account, or a translation, based on their approximation to a model of total faithfulness is bound to reveal their inadequacy. At best, the 'unfaithfulness' of translation is a truism, applicable to all acts of representation, but at worst the argument about fidelity can degenerate into abstract polemics, inviting us to ignore the reality of translation phenomena and the effects of translation strategies. Thus adherence to a myth of faithfulness renders a productive discussion of the historical and ideological functions of both travel writing and translation impossible by moving the focus of attention, once again, to intrinsic qualities of (source and target) texts, and by inviting the production of value judgements rather than informed critical analysis. Focusing on cultural functions rather than faithfulness, on the other hand, does not exclude eventual pronouncements about the value of a translation, but these will have to follow, rather than precede, a historically contextualized analysis of translation phenomena and of the roles they have effectively come to play — rather than the effects they might have been intended to achieve — in specific contexts and circumstances.³

The fact that an ('unfaithful') image of Italian travel writing was produced through translation should then be approached for what it is: a fact, determined by the historical, cultural and literary circumstances of the production and reception of both source and target texts, and by the relationship between these two sets of systemic constraints (i.e. those affecting the original and those affecting the translation). What becomes significant, once we adopt this perspective, is not *the fact* that a distorted image of Italian travellers in Tibet and of their accounts should emerge from the English-language translations of Tucci's, Dainelli's and Maraini's books, but *the way in which* their voices and personae are

³ The need to distinguish between intentions and results when discussing the cultural functions of translation is underlined, in particular, by Edwin Gentzler in 'Translation, Counter-Culture, and *The Fifties* in the USA'.

modified, and the relationship between such changes, their ideological implications, and the effective reception of both original and translated texts. What ultimately matters is not so much *the fact* that translation should produce an image of Italian travel writing which does not correspond to the one existing (or lacking) in the source culture, but *the way in which* this affects the reception of the texts in the target culture, the functions such a re-inscription plays, and how (or whether) such re-labelling manages to be refracted back into the source system, modifying the perception of those (groups of) texts within their original context, and perhaps highlighting phenomena which would have remained invisible (or latent) without the intervention of the re-writings operated by translation.

By underlining the manipulations which occur when a text travels from one system to another, translation can then act as a reactive agent, and reveal important facts about the way in which both literary conventions and cultural values are encoded (and re-encoded) in a text by its author(s), translator(s), and readers. A productive approach to the critical problem posed by the absence of an established travel genre in Italy, will not aim, then, to discover (or construct) a presumed tradition of 'Italian travel writing', nor to judge the faithfulness and appropriateness of the re-writings operated by translation. Rather, it will concentrate on the way in which generic affiliation, textual strategies, and other mechanisms at work in the translation of travel texts affect and are affected by the cultural contexts in which they are produced.

It is precisely this kind of reading which has been attempted in the four case studies presented above. On the basis of the evidence gathered, it can be argued that the historical marginality of Italian travel writing, and the absence of an established literary historiography and generic codification devoted to it, provide authors, readers and, to an

extent, translators with a high degree of freedom. As a marginal genre, one which is often distressed and hybridized, travel writing generally grants the writer larger 'freedom of movement' than many other literary forms. In the Italian context, in particular, travel writing fits the description of 'minor literature' given by Deleuze and Guattari,⁴ and Italian authors have been able; at least in some cases, to harness the energies and opportunities offered by the ex-centric, unregulated, and potentially 'revolutionary' status of this kind of writing in order to produce what can be very appropriately termed 'minor masterpieces'. Additionally, however, the detailed analyses carried out in the preceding chapters indicate that the absence of an established, prescriptive model for Italian travel literature, and the relatively low prestige often attributed to authors (or individual works) associated with this kind of writing, also allow the translators (as well as the editors, the publishers and other professionals involved in the re-writing of Italian texts for the Anglo-American market) greater freedom than usual in their treatment of the originals. It is highly significant, for instance, that among the translations examined, the ones which reveal the most macroscopic manipulations are those of texts by Dainelli or Fallaci, that is works which have little or no literary status in their source culture. The kind of re-writing operated on these books, while clearly not unique or even exceptional, would be much more unusual (and more likely to be censored or heavily criticized) if exercised on texts belonging to the mainstream of 'high' literature. Confirmation of the presence of such links between the prestige of a source text and the strategies adopted when translating it can be found in the fact that William Weaver's translation of Calvino's *Le città invisibili* is by far the most literal of all those examined in the present study. Calvino's personal fame, and the literary status attributed to his work, may well have influenced the choices made (whether consciously or

⁴ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of this concept.

unconsciously) by his English-language translator, as well as his editors and publishers, none of whom made any attempts to alter the perception of *Le città invisibili* as a highly literary piece of writing, or to re-label the book attributing to it any specific generic affiliation. Yet even such a 'faithful' approach to translation could not prevent the onset of reception mechanisms which eventually inscribed *Invisible Cities* with different meanings and functions, re-locating it, both in the eyes of scholarly criticism and popular culture, within the generic area of travel writing.

The case of Claudio Magris's *Danubio* is possibly the one which best exemplifies the complexity of the network of textual and cultural references which at once unite and divide source and target text, and also illustrates the way in which the marginal status of Italian travel writing makes this an ideal area for the observation of such relationships. Magris's own flexible (or even playful) attitude to the generic labelling of *Danubio*, as well as the exasperated metatextuality of the book, point to a conscious strategy of displacement whereby the author tried to mark his work as ex-centric and intensely individual with respect to the tradition of Italian literature. Once *Danubio* moved outside the Italian context, translation and reception strategies supported new readings which tended to restrict the range of meanings attributed to the book, and to signal preferential associations linked to target-culture-specific references and parameters. Yet each interpretation appeared to have been somehow foreseen and supported by the author himself, while, at the same time, the variety of foreign re-writings and re-readings contributed to highlight the complexity of Magris's text in the eyes of Italian audiences and critics. Magris himself was a main actor in both of these processes, often mentioning the foreign reception of his book in interviews and articles, and showing a marked interest for (and remarkably little antagonism towards)

the processes and functions of translation.⁵ As a result, *Danubio*'s Italian image has been partly modified by the success the book achieved elsewhere, while any discussion concerning its translation has centred not on the issues of faithfulness versus distortion, foreignization versus domestication, but rather on the way in which individual cultures have managed to find different areas of relevance and points of entry into the book.⁶ Significantly, the marginality and ex-centricity of *Danubio*, which in Italy rested to a great extent on the identification of Magris with a specifically Triestine tradition and identity, were elsewhere guaranteed by the Italian origin of the work: sufficient distance was created by the foreignness of the author for his writing to resist total re-inscription into domestic canons and genres, and, although it wasn't always assigned the same value, the idiosyncratic originality of *Danubio* remained visible to most commentators who read the book in translation.

The case of *Danubio* provides an excellent example of the mechanisms at work in the relationship between an original, its translation, and their respective reception, including eventual shifts in genre affiliation. It also shows how the processes of appropriation set in motion by translation affect not only the collocation of the work within the target literary and cultural system, but also the relationship established by the reader with the source culture associated with the text. The differences at micro- and macro-textual level between Fallaci's books and their English-language translations, for instance, signal an attempt (possibly a joint one, by the author, her publishers, her editors, and her translators) to make

⁵ Magris discusses his opinions about translation and his personal relationship with translators in 'Traduzioni e Weltliteratur' and 'Traduttore — Giudice, complice e fratello', both in *Atti del convegno 'Verso un'Unione Europea allargata ad Est: Quale ruolo per la traduzione?'* (Trieste 27-28 maggio 1996), ed. by Enrico Arcaini and others, *Quaderni di Libri e riviste d'Italia*, 37 (Rome: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1998), pp. 259-64 and pp. 277-81 respectively.

⁶ Abundant evidence of these traits of *Danubio*'s reception can be found in *Umberto Eco, Claudio Magris: Autori e traduttori a confronto*, ed. by Ljiljana Avirovic and John Dodds, and E. Pellegrini, *Epica sull'acqua*.

those texts more easily recognizable by and palatable to an Anglo-American audience — but the reception of her translated works in the U.S.A. also testifies to the estranging effects of translation. The foreignness of the text, in fact, allows the reader to identify with the author/narrator/protagonist of the travel account, while at the same time safely distancing himself or herself from the less attractive features of this central character. Any negative traits can be ‘blamed’ on Fallaci’s ‘foreign origins’, and as such they need not worry the reader, who can safely believe to be unaffected by them.

Mechanisms of this type are often at work in the reception of translated texts, and they confirm that translations not only ‘construct uniquely domestic representations of foreign cultures’, but ‘are simultaneously engaged in the formation of domestic identities’.⁷ It is partly through self-recognition and partly through self-distancing that the reader establishes a relationship with the translated text, assimilating or refusing its ideologies and value system, and associating it with an image of the relevant source culture.⁸ Following this line of thought, it might be relevant to ask whether one of the reasons for the popularity of certain translated travel accounts might reside precisely in the feelings of reassurance (or perhaps even complacency) associated with the distancing effect resulting from the foreignness of the text. Often the selection of a foreign travel text for translation seems odd or unjustified, especially when, as in the case of Italian travel writing, it cannot be explained simply as a result of the success and/or prestige enjoyed by that book in its source culture. Sometimes the topical quality of the subject offers an alternative explanation — but why,

⁷ L. Venuti, ‘Translation and the formation of Cultural Identities’, p. 17.

⁸ One of the consequences of these mechanisms is that we need to tread very carefully when attributing positive or negative values to different translation strategies: a foreignizing translation which underlines the differences between source and target cultures, and thus allows the reader to maintain a comfortable distance from events, characters and attitudes represented in the text, may be just as ethnocentric as a domesticating approach intent on displacing the foreign element and bringing the text into line with the norms and expectations of the target culture.

after all, should an Italian book on Tibet, or Vietnam, be published in English (a language into which notoriously little is translated), when there are already plenty of volumes on the same subject produced by English-speaking authors? Travel writing is invariably inscribed with culturally determined representations of Self and Otherness. And — especially in its most common incarnation: books about foreign travel — it has played, and still plays, an important role in the development of Western culture, including its latent cosmopolitanism, its nationalistic excesses, its imperial thrust and its colonial enterprises. If it is true that a hybrid, marginal genre may be allowed more freedom in its representations of the world, it is also true that travel writing has often increased that freedom by adding to its marginality the safety-valve of distance, so that ‘by projection and displacement, profoundly troublesome questions of national identity and self-identity [have been] addressed obliquely, sometimes even unconsciously’, and urgent and uncomfortable questions have been ‘mapped on to another landscape’.⁹ In similar, but amplified, fashion, the consumption of travel writing in translation may represent a displacement of a related set of fears and questions, concerning the way in which we see others — and the way in which others see us. In exploiting the freedom granted by its marginal status, travel writing has been conservative at least as often as it has been adventurous, conformist as much as revolutionary. Similarly, a foreign travel text may be allowed greater impunity in its representations of the world, or be considered reassuringly easy to dismiss; the translation may domesticate its foreignness and invite us to feel safe in the conviction that others share our view of the world, or face us with irreconcilable difference and force us to reconsider our own assumptions. Individual texts will reveal individual stories, but it is only from the

⁹ T. Youngs, *Travellers in Africa*, p. 7.

close dialogue between original and translation that many significant details of those stories will emerge.

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